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Wild Weather

Water rescues in South, heavy snow in Midwest

In this photo provided by the Hattiesburg Police Department, released drivers attempt to drive through flash flood waters on Providence Street in Hattiesburg, Miss., Thursday, Dec. 27, 2018.

Associated Press

By **JOHN SEEWER**
Associated Press

A powerful winter storm that brought blizzard warnings Friday across the Upper Midwest was

blamed for at least three fatal crashes while flash flooding from rains in the South swept away cars and forced dozens of water rescues. In northern New England, a

mix of snow, sleet, freezing rain and rain added up to make for dangerous driving Friday for post-holiday travelers. Much of the Dakotas and part of Minnesota were under a

blizzard warning after many areas got a foot (30 centimeters) of snow or more Thursday.

Continued on Page 3



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More U.S. police officers die on duty than before

By **ERIC TUCKER**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — More police officers have died in the line of duty this year in the United States than in 2017, according to data released Thursday.

The most common cause of death was gunfire, and vehicular accidents claimed nearly as many officers' lives.

The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund said in a report that 144 federal, state and local officers have died so far in 2018.

That figure represents roughly a 12 percent increase from the 129 who died in 2017.

The majority of the officers who died were either shot — 52 this year, up from 46 in 2017 — or fatally injured in car or motorcycle crashes, which accounted for 50 deaths.

Other fatalities involved heart attacks, strokes, drownings and cancer and other illnesses among those who responded to the 9/11 World Trade Center attack. Of the officers who were



In this Oct. 8, 2018, file photo, mourners and police officers from around the country attend a memorial service before the funeral for fallen Florence police officer Sgt. Terrence Carraway at the Florence Center in Florence, S.C.

shot, eight were killed during investigative activity and six were killed while responding to calls of a domestic or public disturbance, according to the report.

Two were fatally shot while serving warrants, two died while handling or transporting prisoners and two others were inadvertently shot by other officers.

Craig Floyd, the fund's chief

Associated Press executive officer, called the increase in deaths disappointing after a decline in 2017.

"Sadly this reminds us that public safety is a dangerous job and can come at

a very steep price," Floyd said in a statement accompanying the report. "We must never take the service and sacrifice of law enforcement officers for granted, and we must remember the families of the fallen who are left behind." Of the officers who died in traffic-related incidents, 32 were killed in crashes involving another vehicle and 14 were struck while outside their vehicle.

An additional four were killed in motorcycle crashes.

The officers who died in 2018 include a sheriff's deputy in Sacramento County, California, killed in a shootout at an auto parts store; a Greensboro, North Carolina, police officer killed in a car crash while responding to a call for a robbery; and a Greene County, Missouri, sheriff's deputy who drowned when his car was swept away by rising water. The states that experienced the highest number of officer fatalities were Texas, California, Florida and New York, with 11 fatalities each. □

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Water rescues in South, heavy snow in Midwest

A collision between a small bus and an SUV in Minnesota killed a 47-year-old woman on the bus and injured nine others Thursday. A second person died in central Minnesota after being struck on a road by a pickup with a plow blade. In North Dakota, a pickup truck driver was killed Thursday on a snow-covered highway when visibility was reduced by blowing snow from a plow, according to the state highway patrol. Another storm dumped up to 12 inches (30 centimeters) of rain in Louisiana and Mississippi, sweeping away cars and forcing some residents to be rescued from their homes before the rains moved into Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, and western North Carolina on Friday.

The National Weather Service posted flash flood watches and warnings for much of the South from Louisiana into southwest Virginia.

"We had an extreme flash flooding event," said Glen Moore, the emergency management director in Forrest County, in southwestern Mississippi, which saw 9 inches (23 centimeters) fall over 12 hours through early Friday.

Authorities had to rescue residents from about 25 area homes in Forrest County, Moore said.

They rescued one man whose car was swept away after he went around a barricade on a flooded road, Moore said.

"He was able to make it outside of the car and latch onto a tree until we could get a boat to him," Moore said.

Mississippi officials warned that flood levels on some rivers in the state could be high, especially if the forecast for more rain through Tuesday holds up. Some levels could match a 2016 flood that led to a federal disaster declaration, said Greg Flynn, the state's Emergency Management Agency spokesman.

He said survey teams were still assessing damage from flash flooding in southern Mississippi and it was too



A car fell into this collapsed culvert due to heavy rains on Tommy Butler Road in the Causeyville Whynot area of Lauderdale County, Miss., Friday, Dec 28, 2018.

Associated Press

soon to say how many roads and bridges were damaged or how many homes were flooded.

Rain-fed rivers were rising Friday in some New Orleans suburbs north of big Lake Pontchartrain.

The St. Tammany Parish government told residents of neighborhoods along both sides of the Tchefuncte River to consider voluntary evacuation because of the possibility of flooding Friday night and Saturday. The parish also declared an emergency to coordinate local, state and federal resources.

North of St. Tammany Parish in Washington Parish, Parish President Richard N. Thomas said in a Facebook message that 10 to 13 inches of rain had caused flash floods in the Bogalusa, Varnado and Angie areas, and some people had to be rescued.

There was one death in Tennessee where a woman fell into a rain-rain-swollen creek near Chattanooga. Authorities who recovered the woman's body Friday morning about three hours after she lost her footing said she had been camping in a cave with friends and they were trying to leave the area when she fell into the water.

Rescue workers in north Georgia used a ladder and ropes to get to a woman

and baby stranded in a truck inundated by rising waters Friday. Dramatic video posted to Facebook showed crews working to reach the truck as water reached the vehicle's windshield.

The storm system was blamed for a death in Louisiana earlier this week when a tree fell on a camper.

Forecasters said up to 5 inches (13 centimeters) of rain were possible in northern Alabama and central and north Georgia.

Water also flooded more than a dozen homes in St. Charles Parish, Louisiana, and a Trader Joe's store near New Orleans lost power during the storm, prompting it to donate perishable grocery items to a food bank. □

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GOP and Democrats trade blame for shutdown, no deal in sight

By **ZEKE MILLER, JILL COLVIN and LISA MASCARO**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The partial government shutdown will almost certainly be handed off to a divided government to solve in the new year, as President Donald Trump sought to raise the stakes Friday and both parties traded blame in the weeklong impasse. Agreement eludes Washington in the waning days of the Republican monopoly on power, and that sets up the first big confrontation between Trump and newly empowered Democrats. Trump is sticking with his demand for money to build a wall along the southern border, and Democrats, who take control of



People skate on the National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden Ice Rink, Thursday, Dec. 27, 2018, as a partial government shutdown continues in Washington.



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Associated Press

the House on Jan. 3, are refusing to give him what he wants.

Trump worked to escalate the showdown Friday, reissuing threats to close the U.S.-Mexico border to pressure Congress to fund the wall and to shut off aid to three Central American countries from which many migrants have fled.

"We will be forced to close the Southern Border entirely if the Obstructionist Democrats do not give us the money to finish the Wall & also change the ridiculous immigration laws that our Country is saddled with," he wrote in one of a series of tweets.

The president also signaled he was in no rush to seek a resolution, welcoming the fight as he heads toward his own bid for re-election in 2020. He tweeted Thursday evening that Democrats may be able to block him now, "but we have the issue, Border Security. 2020!"

Incoming acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney said Trump had canceled his plans to travel to Florida to celebrate New Year's at his private Mar-a-Lago club.

The shutdown is forcing hundreds of thousands of federal workers and contractors to stay home or work without pay, and many are experiencing

mounting stress from the impasse. It also is beginning to pinch citizens who count on public services. Gates are closed at some national parks, the government won't issue new federal flood insurance policies, new farm loans will be put on hold beginning next week, and in New York, the chief judge of Manhattan federal courts suspended work on civil cases involving U.S. government lawyers, including several civil lawsuits in which Trump himself is a defendant. The Smithsonian Institution also announced that museums and galleries popular with visitors and locals in the nation's capital will close starting midweek if the partial shutdown drags on.

With another long holiday weekend coming and nearly all lawmakers away from the Capitol there is little expectation of a quick fix.

Mulvaney said Democrats are no longer negotiating with the administration over an earlier offer to accept less than the \$5 billion Trump wants for the wall. Democrats said the White House offered \$2.5 billion for border security, but that Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer told Vice President Mike Pence it wasn't acceptable.

"There's not a single Democrat talking to the president of the United States about this deal," Mulvaney said Friday.

Speaking on Fox News and later to reporters, he tried to drive a wedge between Democrats, pinning the blame on House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi. "My gut was that (Schumer) was really interested in doing a deal and coming to some sort of compromise. But the more we're hearing this week is that it's Nancy Pelosi who's preventing that from happening," he said, alleging that if Pelosi "cuts a deal with the president of any sort before her election on January 3rd she's at risk of losing her speakership, so we're in this for the long haul." □

EPA targets Obama crackdown on mercury from coal plants

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration on Friday targeted an Obama-era regulation credited with helping dramatically reduce toxic mercury pollution from coal-fired power plants, saying the benefits to human health and the environment may not be worth the cost of the regulation.

The 2011 Obama administration rule, called the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards, led to what electric utilities say was an \$18 billion clean-up of mercury and other toxins from the smokestacks of coal-fired power plants.

Overall, environmental groups say, federal and state efforts have cut mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants by 85 percent in roughly the last decade.

Mercury causes brain damage, learning disabilities and other birth defects in children, among other harm. Coal power plants in this country are the largest single manmade source of mercury pollutants, which enters the food chain through fish and other items that people consume.

A proposal Friday from the Environmental Protection Agency challenges the basis for the Obama regulation. It calculates that the crackdown on mercury and other toxins from coal plants produced only a few million dollars a year in measurable health benefits and was not "appropriate and necessary" — a legal benchmark under the country's landmark Clean Air Act.

The proposal, which now goes up for public comment before any final administration approval, would leave the current mercury regulation in place.

However, the EPA said it will seek comment during a 60-day public-review period on whether "we would be obligated to rescind" the Obama-era rule if the agency adopts Friday's finding that the regulation was not appro-

priate and necessary. Any such change would trigger new rounds in what have already been years of court battles over regulating mercury pollution from coal plants.

Friday's move is the latest by the Trump administration that changes estimates of the costs and payoffs of regulations as part of an overhaul of Obama-era environmental protections. It's also the administration's latest proposed move on behalf of the U.S. coal industry, which has been struggling in the face of competition from natural gas and other cheaper, cleaner forms of energy. The Trump administration in August proposed an overhaul for another Obama-era regulation that would have prodded electricity providers to get less of their energy from dirtier-burning coal plants.

In a statement, the EPA said Friday the administration was "providing regulatory certainty" by more accurately estimating the costs and benefits of the Obama administration crackdown on mercury and other toxic emissions from smokestacks.

Hal Quinn, head of the National Mining Association, charged in a statement Friday that the Obama administration had carried out "perhaps the largest regulatory accounting fraud perpetrated on American consumers" when it calculated that the broad health benefits to Americans would outweigh the cost of equipment upgrades by power providers.

Sen. Tom Carper of Delaware, the top Democrat on the Senate's Environment and Public Works Committee, condemned the Trump administration's move.

The EPA has "decided to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory" after the successful clean-up of toxins from the country's coal-plant smokestacks, Carper said.

He and other opponents of the move said the Trump administration was playing with numbers, ignor-



In this July 27, 2018, file photo, the Dave Johnson coal-fired power plant is silhouetted against the morning sun in Glenrock, Wyo.

ing what Carper said were clear health, environmental and economic benefits to come up with a bottom line that suited the adminis-

tration's deregulatory aims. Janet McCabe, a former air-quality official in the Obama administration's EPA, called the proposal

part of "the quiet dismantling of the regulatory framework" for the federal government's environmental protections. □

Associated Press

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or
Grilled Teriyaki Beef Skewers
Marinated in ginger sesame glaze, served with quinoa salad and green asparagus

Amuse Bouche

Main Course
Churrasco Steak
Potato gratin, steamed broccoli and homemade herb chimichurri
or
Turkey Breast
Served with bacon bread and herb stuffing
or
Caribbean Seabass
Served with soba noodles, stir fry vegetables and dark ginger sauce
or
Rack of Lamb
Potato gratin, steamed broccoli and homemade herb chimichurri

Dessert
Warm Cinnamon Apple Strudel
Served with vanilla ice cream and dusted with powder sugar
or
Warm Chocolate Lava Cake
Served with vanilla ice cream
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Latino support for GOP steady despite Trump immigration talk

By **NICHOLAS RICCARDI**

Associated Press

LITTLETON, Colo. (AP) — Pedro Gonzalez has faith in Donald Trump and his party.

The 55-year-old Colombian immigrant is a pastor at an evangelical church in suburban Denver. Initially repelled by Trump in 2016, he's been heartened by the president's steps to protect religious groups and appoint judges who oppose abortion rights. More important, Gonzalez sees Trump's presidency as part of a divine plan.

"It doesn't matter what I think," Gonzalez said of the president. "He was put there."

Though Latino voters are a key part of the Democratic coalition, there is a larger bloc of reliable Republican Latinos than many think. And the GOP's position among Latinos has not weakened during the Trump administration, despite the president's rhetoric against immigrants and the party's shift to the right on immigration.

In November's elections, 32 percent of Latinos voted for Republicans, according to AP VoteCast data. The survey of more than 115,000 midterm voters — including 7,738 Latino voters — was conducted for The Associated Press by NORC at the University of Chicago.

Other surveys also found roughly one-third of Latinos supporting the GOP. Data from the Pew Research Center and from exit polls suggests that a comparable share of about 3 in 10 Latino voters supported Trump in 2016. That tracks the share of Latinos supporting Republicans for the last decade.

The stability of Republicans' share of the Latino vote frustrates Democrats, who say actions like Trump's family separation policy and his demonization of an immigrant caravan should drive Latinos out of the GOP.

"The question is not are Democrats winning the Hispanic vote — it's why aren't Democrats winning the Hispanic vote 80-20 or 90-10 the way black voters are?"



In this May 25, 2016, file photo, a man holds up a sign for then-Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump before the start of a rally at the Anaheim Convention Center, Wednesday, May 25, 2016, in Anaheim, Calif.

said Fernand Amandi, a Miami-based Democratic pollster. He argues Democrats must invest more in winning Latino voters.

The VoteCast data shows that, like white voters, Latinos are split by gender — 61 percent of men voted Democratic in November, while 69 percent of women did. And while Republican-leaning Latinos can be found everywhere in the country, two groups stand out as especially likely to back the GOP — evangelicals and veterans.

Evangelicals comprised about one-quarter of Latino voters, and veterans were 13 percent. Both groups were about evenly split between the two parties. Mike Madrid, a Republican strategist in California, said those groups have reliably provided the GOP with many Latino votes for years.

"They stick and they do not go away," Madrid said. Much as with Trump's own core white voters, attacks on the president and other Republicans for being anti-immigrant "just make them dig in even more," he added.

Sacramento-based Rev. Sam Rodriguez, one of

Trump's spiritual advisers, said evangelical Latinos have a clear reason to vote Republican. "Why do 30 percent of Latinos still support Trump? Because of the Democratic Party's obsession with abortion," Rodriguez said. "It's life and religious liberty and everything else follows."

Some conservative Latinos say their political leanings make them feel more like a minority than their ethnicity does. Irina Vilariño, 43, a Miami restaurateur and Cuban immigrant, said she had presidential bumper stickers for Sen. John McCain, Mitt Romney and Trump scratched off her car. She said she never suffered from discrimination growing up in a predominantly white south Florida community, "but I remember during the McCain campaign being discriminated against because I supported him."

The 2018 election was good to Democrats, but Florida disappointed them. They couldn't convince enough of the state's often right-leaning Cuban-American voters to support Sen. Bill Nelson, who was ousted by the GOP's Spanish-speaking Gov. Rick Scott,

or rally behind Democrats' gubernatorial candidate, Tallahassee Mayor Andrew Gillum, who lost to Republican Rep. Ron DeSantis.

Still, in the rest of the country, there were signs that pleased Democrats. Latinos voted at high rates in an election that saw record-setting turnout among all demographic groups. Latinos normally have among the worst midterm turnout rates, and while official data won't be available for months, a number of formerly-Republican congressional districts in California and New Mexico flipped Democratic.

That's why Republicans shouldn't take solace from being able to consistently win about one-third of Latinos, said Madrid. They're still losing two-thirds of an electorate that's being goaded into the voting booth by Trump.

"That is contributing to the death spiral of the Republican Party — even if it holds at 30 percent," Madrid said. "That's a route to death, it's just a slower one."

Gonzalez, the pastor, sees the trend in Colorado. He distributed literature across Spanish-speaking congregations supporting Repub-

lican gubernatorial candidate Walker Stapleton, who was crushed by Democratic Rep. Jared Polis as the GOP lost every race for statewide office.

Gonzalez understands the anger among some Latinos at the GOP and Trump for what he says is a false impression of a solely hard-line immigration stance. "In the community that is not informed, that is following the rhetoric of the media, there's a view that Donald Trump is a bad guy," Gonzalez said. Evangelicals "understand that he's there to defend values."

Gonzalez's church is Iglesia Embajada del Reino, or Church of the Kingdom's Embassy. On a recent Saturday night, an eight-piece band played Spanish-language Christian rock before Gonzalez walked to the podium. Wearing a blue corduroy blazer, blue shirt and grey slacks, Gonzalez, a onetime member of a Marxist group in Colombia, told his congregants that they were ambassadors of a higher power — the kingdom of God.

"It's important that your political opinions, your social opinions," not enter into it, Gonzalez said. "We need to represent the position of 'The Kingdom.'" Afterward the congregation gathered for bowls of posole, a traditional Mexican soup. When politics came up, church-goers struggled to balance their enthusiasm for some of Trump's judicial appointments with their distaste at his rhetoric and actions. "I think the president has good, Christian principles," said Jose Larios, a parks worker. "But we feel as Latinos that he doesn't embrace our community, and our community is good and hard-working."

Oscar Murillo, a 37-year-old horse trainer, is not a fan of Trump's. But he tries to stay open-minded about Republicans. He voted for the GOP candidate for state attorney general, who visited the congregation before the election. "He's in the same party as Trump, but he seems different," Murillo said. □

Sheriff blames sanctuary law for California officer's death

By OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ and JOCELYN GECKER

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A suspected drunken driver accused of killing a California police officer who pulled him over was captured Friday as he tried to flee back to Mexico, where he lived before illegally crossing into the U.S., authorities said.

The sheriff leading the investigation blamed California's sanctuary law for preventing local authorities from reporting Gustavo Perez Arriaga to U.S. immigration officials for two previous drunken driving arrests. If he had been deported, the sheriff said, Cpl. Ronil Singh of the tiny Newman Police Department would still be alive.

"We can't ignore the fact that this could have been preventable," Stanislaus County Sheriff Adam Christianson told reporters, asking why the state was "providing sanctuary for criminals (and) gang members. It's a conversation we need to have."

Following a statewide manhunt, Perez Arriaga was arrested on a murder warrant in a house near Bakersfield, about 200 miles (320 kilometers) southeast of where Singh was shot Wednesday.

As a SWAT team prepared to raid the house, Perez Arriaga came out with his hands up and surrendered. He was sent north in the slain officer's handcuffs, Kern County Sheriff Donny Youngblood said.

Perez Arriaga crossed the border in Arizona several years ago and had worked a variety of jobs as a laborer, including at several dairies. The 33-year-old Mexico native had gang affiliations and multiple Facebook pages with different names, Christianson said.

The shooting came amid an intense political fight over immigration, with President Donald Trump and congressional Democrats at odds over funding for a border wall that has forced a partial government shutdown.

Trump tweeted about Singh's



Law enforcement and family members of slain Newman Police officer Ronil Singh listen to Stanislaus County Sheriff Adam Christianson, center, talk about the arrest of suspect Gustavo Perez Arriaga and others during a press conference at the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department Friday, Dec. 28, 2018, in Modesto, Calif.

killing Thursday, saying it was "time to get tough on Border Security. Build the Wall!" California's sanctuary law limits cooperation between local authorities and U.S. immigration officials and has drawn scorn from the Trump administration. It includes more than 800 exceptions for violent crimes and felonies and bars police from asking people about their citizenship status.

Former state Sen. Kevin de Leon, the Democrat who wrote the legislation, said it's unfair to blame the law for the officer's death.

Christianson, who was at a meeting with Trump and slams California's law in a video posted by the White House in May, said the measure prohibited his department from sharing Perez Arriaga's gang ties, "other active warrants" and past DUI arrests with federal immigration authorities. He didn't give details on the other warrants.

That suggests law enforcement could have apprehended Perez Arriaga previously, de Leon said.

"He should've been in the physical custody of law enforcement," de Leon said. To blame the law "is highly irresponsible."

Gov. Jerry Brown has said the law strikes a balance between protecting families and ensuring consequences for serious

criminals. His spokesman said Friday that if the suspect was a known gang member, police could have provided that information to federal authorities.

"California law fully permits the sharing of information on dangerous gang members," spokesman Evan Westrup said.

A federal judge upheld the law earlier this year after a Trump administration challenge.

Authorities also arrested five other people, including Perez Arriaga's brother, 25-year-old Adrian Virgen, and a co-worker, 32-year-old Erik Razo Quiroz, who lied to police to try to protect him, Christianson said. He said both men also were in the country illegally.

Three people also were arrested at the home near Bakersfield for helping Perez Arriaga, Youngblood said.

The 33-year-old officer was an immigrant, too, arriving legally from his native Fiji to fulfill his dream of becoming a police officer, authorities said. Singh had a newborn son and joined the 12-officer Newman police force in 2011. "He came to America with one purpose, and that was to serve this country," Newman Police Chief Randy Richardson said Thursday, choking up. He called Singh an "American patriot." □

Associated Press

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Ulysses High School senior Braxton Moral sits for a portrait at the school in Ulysses, Kan., on Wednesday, Dec. 12, 2018.

Associated Press

Kansas teen to get high school, Harvard diplomas in 1 month

ULYSSES, Kan. (AP) — A 16-year-old Kansas boy will soon earn his high school diploma — and a few days later he'll travel to Harvard to collect his bachelor's degree.

Ulysses High School senior Braxton Moral will attend both commencement ceremonies in May, becoming the only student to successfully pursue a four-year high school degree and a bachelor's degree from Harvard at the same time, The Hutchinson News reported. Harvard has changed the rules, Braxton's father Carlos Moral said, so his son will "the one and only" reaching that milestone. Braxton Moral will be 17 when he gets his diplomas.

Carlos Moral said they began to realize their son was special when he was in the third grade.

"They told us: 'You need to do something. He's not just gifted. He's really, really gifted,'" he said.

The Ulysses school district allowed him to take some high school classes while he was still in middle school. Before high school he took a class offered at Fort Hays State University. Then he was admitted into Harvard. Braxton Moral simultaneously studied at the high school and the Harvard Extension School. The program typically serves adults who work and can't attend classes on campus full time. Ulysses High School math teacher Patsy Love served as the proctor for the Harvard program, administering Moral's tests in Kansas. Moral spent the summer before his junior year at Harvard's campus in Cambridge, Massachusetts. □

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Lawyer: McCarrick repeatedly touched youth during confession

By NICOLE WINFIELD
Associated Press

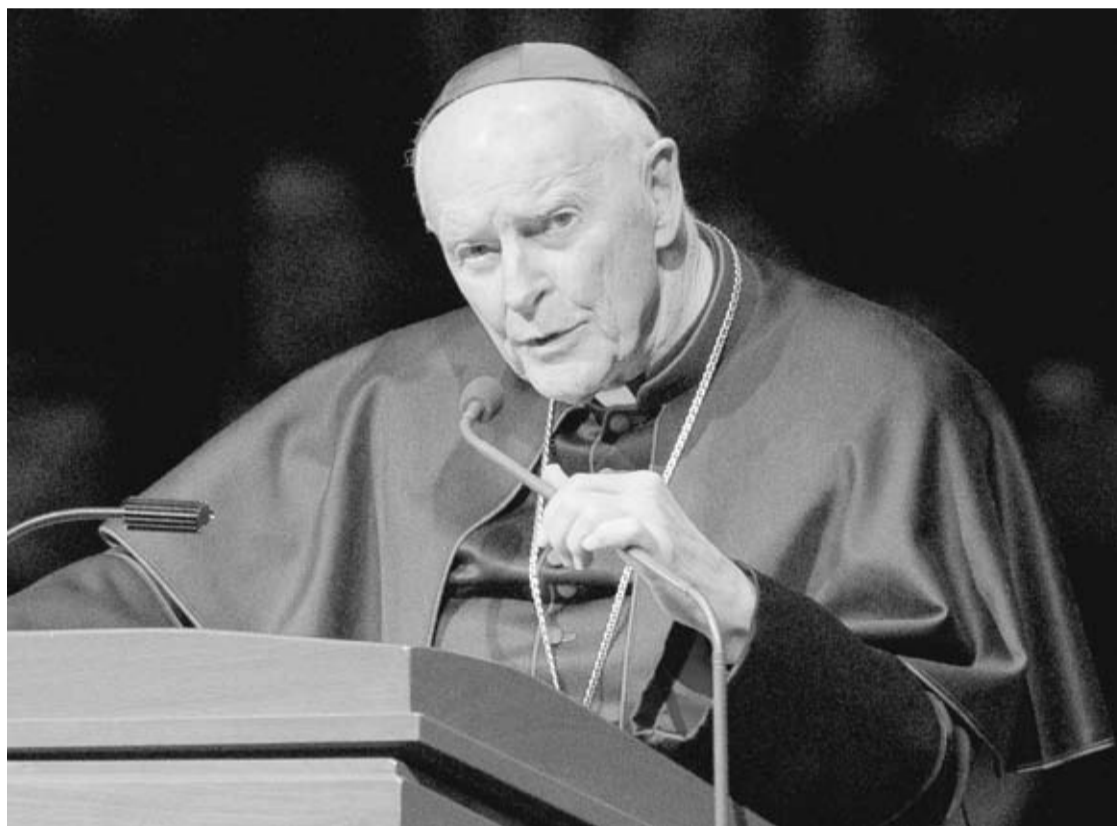
VATICAN CITY (AP) — The Vatican's sexual abuse case against ex-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick has expanded significantly after a man testified that the retired American archbishop sexually abused him for years starting when he was 11, including during confession.

James Grein testified Thursday in New York before the judicial vicar for the New York City archdiocese, who was asked by the Holy See to take his statement for the Vatican's canonical case, said Grein's attorney Patrick Noaker.

The testimony, which lasted about an hour, was difficult and stressful but Grein was proud to have done it, Noaker said.

"He wants his church back. He felt that in order to accomplish that end, he had to go in and testify here and tell them what happened, and give the church itself the chance to do the right thing," Noaker said in a telephone interview Friday. Grein initially came forward in July after the New York archdiocese announced that a church investigation determined an allegation that McCarrick had groped another teenage altar boy in the 1970s was credible. Grein's claims, first reported by The New York Times, are more serious. He has alleged that McCarrick first exposed himself to Grein when he was 11 and then sexually molested him for years thereafter.

Noaker said in the testimony Thursday, Grein also



In this March 4, 2015, file photo, Cardinal Theodore McCarrick speaks during a memorial service in South Bend, Ind.

gave "chilling" details about alleged repeated incidents of groping during confession - a serious canonical crime on top of the original offense of sexually abusing a minor.

Grein had previously not made public those claims, but Noaker confirmed his testimony to The Associated Press. Grein also allowed McCarrick's defense lawyers to listen to his testimony by telephone.

"He touched James' genitals as part of the confessional. That became the course, it happened almost every time," Noaker said. McCarrick would absolve Grein and "touch him on the forehead, shoulder, chest and genitals."

Noaker said combining sexual abuse with a sacra-

ment like confession haunts Grein to this day.

"People are vulnerable in the confessional. Very vulnerable," he said. "If you manipulate that, and try to sexualize that, it's extremely emotionally damaging." McCarrick denied the initial groping allegation of the altar boy and has said through his lawyer that he looks forward to his right to due process. It wasn't clear when he would testify in the Vatican case.

The McCarrick scandal has sparked a credibility crisis for the U.S. and Vatican church hierarchies, since it was apparently an open secret for some that "Uncle Ted" slept with adult seminarians. Yet McCarrick still rose to the heights of church power, and even

acted as the spokesman for U.S. bishops when they enacted a "zero tolerance" policy against sexually abusive priests in 2002. Pope Francis initially ordered McCarrick removed from public ministry in June after he was accused of groping the teenage altar boy - the first known allegation against him involving a teen. A month later, after former seminarians and Grein came forward, Francis removed McCarrick as a cardinal and ordered him to live a lifetime of penance and prayer while the canonical process ran its course.

Now 88, the former archbishop of Washington is living at a Kansas religious residence.

The Vatican is under pres-

sure to finalize its case against McCarrick before Francis hosts church leaders at a February sex abuse prevention summit, since Francis himself has been implicated in the yearslong cover-up of McCarrick's misconduct with adults.

If convicted by the Vatican, Francis could defrock McCarrick or give him a lesser penalty.

While victims have long complained about the way they have been treated during canonical proceedings, Noaker praised the judicial vicar, the Rev. Richard Welch, saying he was compassionate, respectful and patient during Grein's testimony.

Noaker said Welch gave Grein time to compose himself when he testified about an incident in which McCarrick allegedly masturbated Grein in a car. When McCarrick dropped Grein back at home, he allegedly told Grein's parents that the mess was caused by a spilled soda, so Grein's mother went to clean up the car seat.

"That was a really psychologically damaging moment," Noaker said, adding that Grein had to relive it during his testimony. "He closed his eyes. He was sitting in that car with McCarrick, and you could see it. It was moving and terrifying." Grein has told AP in the past that he struggled for decades with immense shame and guilt over the abuse. He said he struggled with alcoholism, which broke up his marriage, and attempted suicide multiple times. □

Syria claims it has entered key Kurdish-held town

By SARAH EL DEEB

Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Syria's military said Friday it had entered the key Kurdish-held town of Manbij in an apparent deal with the Kurds, who are looking for new allies and protection against a threatened Turkish offensive as U.S. troops prepare to leave Syria.

Turkey and American troops patrolling the town denied there was any change of forces in the contested area, contradicting the Syrians and highlighting the potential for chaos in the wake of last week's surprise pronouncement by the United States that it was withdrawing its troops.

Since the U.S. announcement, forces have been building up around Manbij and further east, ushering in new alliances and raising the chances for friction. The Kurds' invitation to Syrian troops shows they'd rather let Syria's Russian- and Iranian-backed government fill the void left by the Americans, than face the prospect of being overwhelmed by their top rival Turkey.

Meanwhile, a flurry of meetings is expected in the coming days as all sides of the conflict scramble to find ways to replace the departing U.S. troops. They include one Saturday in Moscow, where Russia will host top Turkish officials in a possible sign that the two sides could be working on a deal to avert a Turkish offensive into Syria. Russian officials have said they expect Syrian government troops to replace the U.S. troops when they withdraw.

Turkey considers the U.S.-backed Kurdish People's Protection Units, which now controls nearly 30 percent of Syria, a terrorist group linked to an insurgency within its own borders. Kurdish-controlled Manbij has been at the center of rising tension between the U.S. and Turkey.

There were conflicting reports Friday on the location of the Syrian troops,



In this March 29, 2018 photo, a Syrian student walks next a wall with Arabic that reads: "We will not emigrate we will confront, no to the Turkish occupation," in Manbij, north Syria.

who said they had moved into Manbij and raised the Syrian flag in the town. The Kurdish militia said it has invited the Syrian government to take control of Manbij to protect it against "a Turkish invasion."

But a Kurdish official said the government deployment has so far been limited to the front line with Turkey-backed fighters, based north and west of Manbij. And U.S. officials in Washington said Syrian regime forces and some Russian forces had moved a bit closer to the city and were largely south or southwest of the city. The officials spoke anonymously because they were not authorized to discuss the troop movements publicly. The U.S.-led coalition said the announcement that government troops had entered the town was "incorrect," and called "on everyone to respect the integrity of Manbij and the safety of its citizens."

Russia and Iran, meanwhile, welcomed the Syrian announcement. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov called it a "positive step" that could help stabilize the area. Iran hailed it as a "major step toward establishing the government's authority" over all of Syria. Russia has signaled it expects the Syrian govern-

ment to deploy where U.S. forces leave.

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the Syrian government move was "a psychological act," and the situation in Manbij was uncertain. He spoke as Turkey-allied forces in Syria said they were fortify-

ing their front line positions ahead of the possible military offensive.

But Erdogan also noted that his country's goal is to oust the Kurdish militia from along his country's borders. "If terror organizations leave, then there is no work left for us anyway," Erdo-

gan told reporters.

In Washington, Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham, who broke with U.S. President Donald Trump on his decision to withdraw U.S. troops from Syria, tweeted that reports about the Kurds aligning with Assad were a "major disaster in the making." Graham, a leading voice on foreign policy and national security issues in Congress, warned the development would be a "nightmare for Turkey and eventually Israel." Graham tweeted that the "big winners" are Russia, Iran, Assad and Islamic State militants. National Security Adviser John Bolton is expected in Turkey after the new year.

Friday's announcement by the Syrian military comes as Turkey and allied Syrian fighters have been sending in reinforcement to the front lines and threatening an offensive to dislodge the Kurdish forces. In response, the U.S. first warned against unilateral action and increased patrols and observation points in north-eastern Syria. □

Associated Press

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5 things to know about Romania's EU presidency before Jan. 1

By ALISON MUTLER
Associated Press

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP)

— Romania will take over the rotating presidency of the European Union on Jan. 1 from Austria. The role is partly symbolic but does involve setting the EU agenda and being a diplomatic go-between to reach consensus among the 28 members on issues ranging from Brexit to fishing rights. Here are five things you should know about the East European country's first ever EU presidency.

IS IT READY?

President Klaus Iohannis last month said Romania wasn't up to the presidency, creating momentary panic in the EU. Finland immediately upped its readiness (it's due to take over from Romania on July 1). Romania's most powerful politician, Liviu Dragnea, the chairman of the Social Democratic Party, then asked party colleagues to find a way to prosecute Iohannis for treason over those remarks. Iohannis has since struck a more optimistic tone and there is reported to be an unstated agreement between Iohannis and Premier Viorica Dancila to present a reasonably united face re-



In this April 27, 2018 file photo, the leader of Romania's ruling Social Democratic party, Liviu Dragnea, walks out of the anti-corruption prosecutors' office, in Bucharest.

garding the EU presidency during its duration.

THE AGENDA

March 29 is the official date when Britain leaves the EU, deal or no-deal. Romania, which has up to half a million citizens working in the U.K., will host an EU summit in the picturesque Transylvanian city of Sibiu for the event.

European Parliamentary elections for the 751-seat Parliament will happen from May 23-26.

Romania has 257 files, including issues such as migration and a multiannual EU budget, to deal with during its presidency. It will likely try to close as many as possible, insiders say. A number of EU officials will be seconded to Bucharest to help out.

CORRUPTION

The big sticking point in the presidency is corruption and the rule of law in one of the bloc's most graft-riddled states. When Roma-

nia joined the bloc in 2007, its justice system remained under special monitoring, and that hasn't been lifted — most recently due to a contentious judicial overhaul the Social Democrats embarked on two years ago that critics say will stifle efforts to tackle high-level graft. The government was successful in dismissing chief anti-corruption prosecutor Laura Codruta Kovesi over mismanagement allegations. That was

Associated Press

in July and Kovesi — highly praised by the EU and U.S. for hundreds of successful prosecutions during her five-year mandate — still hasn't been replaced.

Dragnea is pressing for an amnesty for "thousands of people" he says were wrongly imprisoned by anti-corruption prosecutors. Romania's government claims prosecutors have had too much power and the country should be allowed to decide its own laws.

PRESIDENT v. GOVERNMENT

Romania's presidency will likely bring to the fore disagreements between Iohannis, a centrist whom Brussels regards as a supporter of the anti-corruption fight, and Dragnea, who has recently been vocal in his criticism of foreign companies and banks and considers the anti-corruption fight to be deeply unfair. Dragnea, who was handed a 3½-year prison sentence in June for abuse of office, will hear his appeal in that case during the presidency. Although he can't be premier due to a 2016 conviction for vote-rigging, he recently hinted he may eye a run for president against Iohannis in the 2019 election. □

Weather hampers efforts to inspect Indonesia tsunami volcano

Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)

— Bad weather and a massive ash column hampered efforts to assess whether Indonesia's Anak Krakatau volcano island could trigger another deadly tsunami as authorities said Friday the search for victims in the worst-affected province will continue into January. Indonesia's disaster agency said that 426 people died in the Sunda Strait tsunami that struck Sumatra and Java without warning on Saturday. That was slightly lower than previously announced due to some victims being recorded twice. It said 23 are missing and more than 40,000 displaced. High seas, clouds and con-



Soldiers remove debris from a damaged house in the tsunami-hit village of Carita, Indonesia, Friday, Dec. 28, 2018.

Associated Press

stant eruptions have hindered attempts to visually inspect Anak Krakatau, the offspring of the infamous Krakatau volcano whose eruption in 1883 caused a period of global cooling. A large part of the volca-

no collapsed following an eruption Saturday, triggering the tsunami.

Authorities have warned Sunda Strait residents to stay a kilometer away from the coastline, citing the potential for another tsunami.

Gegar Prasetya, co-founder of the Tsunami Research Center Indonesia, said the severity of another potential tsunami could be less since satellite radar shows the volcano is now much smaller.

Saturday's tsunami hit more than 300 kilometers (186 miles) of coastline with waves of 2 meters (about 6 1/2 feet) or higher.

"According to the theory and my past research, the severity of the potential tsunami is reduced significantly. This morning we tried to take an aerial photo from the plane to confirm the satellite image but failed due to cloud cover," Prasetya said.

The disaster agency said the emergency period for

Banten province in Java ends Jan. 9 and on Friday for Lampung province in Sumatra.

About 1,600 people have been evacuated from Sebesi island nearest Anak Krakatau and the remaining residents from its population of more than 2,800 will be transported Friday, the agency said.

Sulphur and thick ash from the continually erupting volcano has blanketed the island. Janine Krippner, a New Zealand-born volcanologist at Concord University in West Virginia, said it's hard to assess the risk of another Anak Krakatau collapse and tsunami because authorities don't know how stable its remaining edifice is. □



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North Korea's 'Singapore shops' expose gap in sanctions push

By ERIC TALMADGE
Associated Press

PYONGYANG, North Korea (AP) — Despite the unwanted publicity of a criminal trial for one of their main suppliers, business is booming at Pyongyang's 'Singapore shops,' which sell everything from Ukrainian vodka to brand-name knock-offs from China. The stores stock many of the very things United Nations' sanctions banning trade in luxury goods are intended to block and provide a nagging reminder that not all potential trade partners are lining up behind the U.N.'s pronouncements or the Trump administration's policy of maximum pressure on the North.

Especially when there's a buck — or a few million bucks — to be made.

The stores are anything but secret.

They are well marked, open to walk-ins and distribute their own membership cards to reward regular customers. Until recently, the name of their Singaporean partner, the OCN Group, was printed on the Bugsae shop's plastic shopping bags. And while being the focus of the court case that could land OCN's former director in prison for a very long time, they continue to unabashedly specialize in imported products — perfumes, fine jewelry, wines, clothing and cosmetics — that would appear to blatantly violate U.N. restrictions.

Formally known as the Potonggang Ryugyong Shop and the Bugsae Shop, the stores are a fixture of the upscale shopping scene in Pyongyang, catering to the capital's elites, Chinese businessmen and members of the diplomatic corps. Purchases can be made in



In this Dec. 21, 2018, photo, a North Korean woman walks outside Bugsae Shop, also known as the "Singapore Shop," in Pyongyang, North Korea.

dollars, euros and Chinese yuan. The price in each is displayed digitally on the cash register.

Both stores have been substantially renovated since last summer.

The Ryugyong store now has a coffee shop behind the imported shoe section on its second floor. The Bugsae shop has installed dark wood paneling and glass casing for its wines and spirits corner, which was recently dominated by vodkas from the Ukraine. It has separate display areas for snacks and soft drinks from Japan, Malaysia and China, a row dedicated to fancy shampoos, and a section in the rear for imported electronic appliances and household goods.

The well-stocked shelves belie the hit supplies must have taken with the arrest of their former Singaporean trading partner.

Ng Kheng Wah, 56, faces 80 charges of violating Unit-

ed Nations sanctions for allegedly supplying \$6 million worth of luxury goods to the Bugsae Shop from 2010 to 2017. This includes watches "clad with a precious metal," jewelry, musical instruments and wine. While OCN is not mentioned, the charges accuse Ng of trying to defraud banks through another of his companies, T Specialist International.

Ng was charged on July 18 and granted bail of 500,000 Singapore dollars (\$364,645). A pretrial conference is scheduled for Jan. 17. For each offense under the U.N. sanctions act, Ng faces a maximum sentence of five years in jail and a 100,000 Singapore dollars (\$72,929) fine. Each cheating charge comes with an additional maximum jail term of 10 years and an unspecified fine.

Singapore authorities have accused another Singaporean and a North Korean man of helping to supply

luxury goods to Pyongyang. They are also investigating a Singaporean businessman who is facing criminal charges in the United States for allegedly violating sanctions against North Korea. Ng denied any wrongdoing in an interview with the Singaporean newspaper The Straits Times shortly after reports of possible violations became public. He said OCN was the sole distributor of the popular Japanese Pokka brand canned drinks in North Korea from 2000 and 2012, but claimed OCN dropped that when Japan imposed sanctions banning such exports. Documents presented in court show that in early 2014 his other business, T Specialist International, presented a bogus invoice to a bank from which it was seeking a loan, claiming it had received \$522,410 for Pokka sales.

The case hints at an uncomfortable truth that has long hamstrung efforts to

make sanctions enforcement really bite: engaging the North is not as uniformly taboo with potential trading partners as Washington might like.

China has long been Pyongyang's biggest pipeline. With Ng on trial, it's almost certainly where most of the Singapore shops' goodies come from, even if they originate elsewhere. The two countries have a long border, a rail connection, and almost-daily flights between their capitals that allow for the transport of a significant amount of goods. Russia is another important trader. So have been interests in countries like Egypt, which helped fund and set up the North's mobile phone system, and HB Oil of Mongolia, which was involved in a 2013 deal to build gas stations in Pyongyang.

Singapore, which in June hosted the summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, has relatively close ties with the North. North Korea runs an embassy in Singapore, though Singapore does not have an embassy in Pyongyang.

The two also have a long history of doing business.

While rumors swirled about how the Trump summit might lead to the North getting its first McDonalds, a trio of Singaporean businessmen had already gotten the jump on the Pyongyang burger market, in 2009. Burgers hot off the grill of the chain of fast food restaurants started by Patrick Soh, Quek Cher Lan and Timothy Tan called "Samtaesong," or Three Big Stars, are almost required eating at an amusement park next to Kim Il Sung Stadium. □

Father of dead Guatemalan boy heard rumors they could cross

By **SONIA PEREZ D.**

Associated Press

GUATEMALA CITY (AP) —

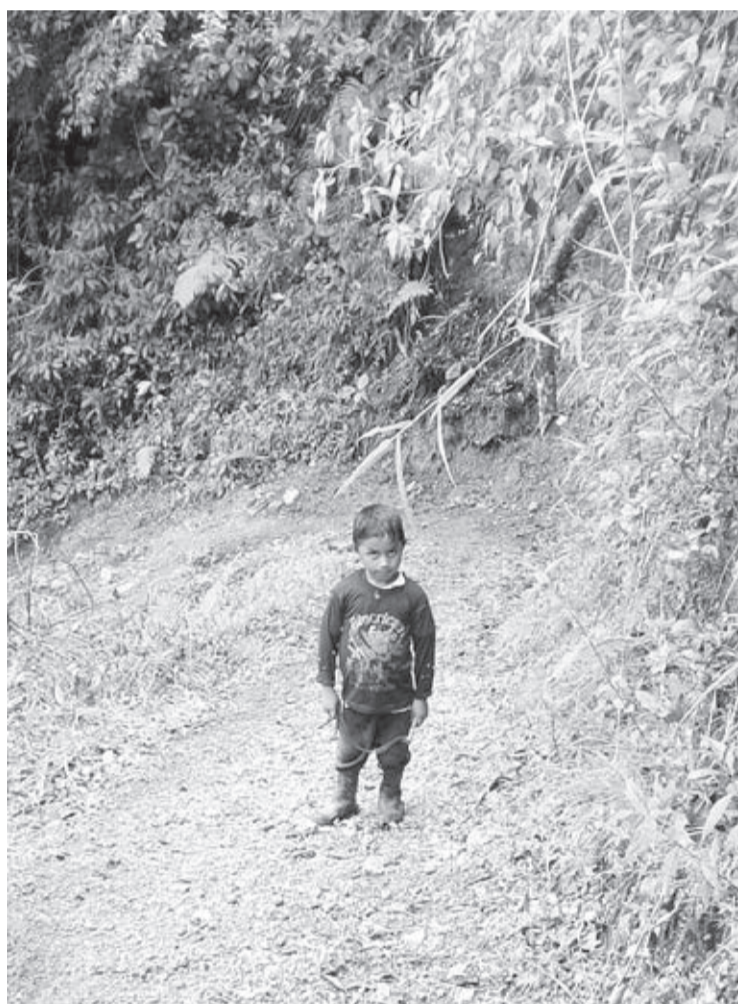
The father of an 8-year-old Guatemalan boy who died in U.S. custody took his son to the border after hearing rumors that parents and their children would be allowed to migrate to the United States and escape the poverty in their homeland, the boy's stepsister told The Associated Press.

Felipe Gomez Alonzo died Monday at a New Mexico hospital after suffering coughing, vomiting and fever, authorities said. It was the second such death this month. Another Guatemalan child, 7-year-old Jakelin Caal, died in U.S. custody on Dec. 8. Both deaths are under investigation.

"We heard rumors that they could pass (into the United States). They said they could pass with the children," said Catarina Gomez Lucas, the boy's 21-year-old stepsister, explaining why Felipe and his father, Agustin Gomez, made the dangerous journey.

Gomez Lucas would not say who spread the rumors or who transported the father and son to the border from Yalambojoch in Huehuetenango province, a poor community of returnees from Mexico who had fled Guatemala in the bloodiest years of that country's 1960-1996 civil war. The stepsister spoke to the AP on Wednesday by telephone from Yalambojoch.

The boy's death came during an ongoing dispute over border security and with the U.S. government



This undated photo provided by Catarina Gomez on Thursday, Dec. 27, 2018, shows her stepbrother Felipe Gomez Alonzo, 7, near Laguna Brava in Yalambojoch, Guatemala.

Associated Press

partially shut down over President Donald Trump's insistence on funding for a longer border wall.

The Trump administration has long argued smugglers capitalize on vulnerable parents because of "loop-holes" in American law, such as anti-trafficking legislation passed in 2008 that effectively prevents the immediate deportations of Central American children. After hearing the rumors, Agustin Gomez thought he should take advantage of "the opportunity" to fulfill his son's dreams. He grabbed a few changes of clothing,

bought the boy new shoes and left with what money he had, Gomez Lucas said. Felipe "always wanted a bicycle," and in the U.S. he wouldn't have to endure the poverty and lack of opportunity in Guatemala, she said.

The boy's mother, 31-year-old Catarina Alonzo Perez, said she spoke with her son the day before they arrived at the U.S. border.

"He wasn't sick on the way; he wasn't sick here," she said through her stepdaughter in the Mayan language known as Chuj.

Both Felipe and Jakelin

came from rural communities with extreme poverty. Both were taken to the border by their parents and detained by the U.S. Border Patrol before they fell ill.

It appears Felipe got sick after authorities moved him from El Paso, Texas, to Alamogordo, New Mexico, because of overcrowding.

"He was very happy to leave" on the voyage, Gomez Lucas said, so the family does not understand what happened.

She said the family stopped hearing from Felipe's father on Dec. 18, when he and the boy were detained. On Dec. 25, he called to say the boy had died in a hospital.

"He told us that (Felipe) was fine all day, that he was playing with other children. But then he said he felt bad and his stomach ached," the stepsister said.

Felipe told his father he did not know what was wrong with him and that it felt like something was stuck in his throat, Gomez Lucas said. The father said Felipe asked him not to cry because he "was not going to get better," according to the boy's stepsister.

Felipe was taken to a hospital, and the father said he gave the boy to doctors, who soon informed him his son had died.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection said the boy displayed signs of illness Monday and was taken with his father to the hospital, where he was diagnosed with a cold and a fever and prescribed amoxicillin and ibuprofen. He was released that afternoon but

returned in the evening with nausea and vomiting and died there just after midnight, CBP said.

An autopsy performed on 8-year-old Felipe shows he had the flu, the New Mexico Office of the Medical Investigator said in a statement late Thursday, adding that more tests need to be done before a cause of death can be determined. After the two deaths, the government announced that it would conduct additional medical screening for children and consider other changes.

Agustin Gomez was drowning in debt, Gomez Lucas said. He sold a piece of land to survive, but the money was not enough, so he decided to take out a loan and travel to the United States.

Felipe is survived by five siblings, two from his father's first marriage and three from his stepmother and father.

The boy lived with his father's family in a small wooden house with earthen floors. It lacked basic services. Gomez Lucas said Felipe's father earned about \$6 a day through temporary farm jobs or harvesting coffee, which was not enough to support the family.

As with Jakelin's family, Felipe's relatives now must deal with the death of a child, a debt and their continued worry about the fate of Agustin Gomez.

Oscar Padilla, the Guatemalan consul in Phoenix, confirmed that the father is still detained by the Border Patrol. □

LOCAL



“The Divi Royal Masquerade Ball, year-end celebration”



PALM BEACH — The Divi & Tamarijn All Inclusive Hotels, Divi & Dutch Village N.V., Divi Golf Aruba N.V. and Divi Phoenix Beach Resorts celebrated their year-end celebration 2018 with the theme of: Royal Masquerade Ball in the Renaissance Convention Center! Musical entertainment was provided by DJ Joa Salas and Buleria.

The Divi Resorts also recognized the employees' outstanding performance during 2018 and presented the awards ceremony for the following categories: Employee of the Year, Supervisor of the Year and Manager of the year for the different properties. The nominations for the different categories for the different companies were

as follows:

The Dutch Village N.V.: The nominee for employee of the year was Bernardo Romero of the housekeeping department and the winner was Rose Marie Valentin, also from the housekeeping department.

Divi Village I N.V.: The nominees for employee of the year were: Sonia Brazobar from housekeeping, Sherly Vargas from F&B, Milagros Ramirez from kitchen, Denroy Gregory from front office and the winner was Gloria Defoe from the activities department.

The nominees for supervisor of the year was Gandra Perigault Monte and the winner was Wendeline Paesch from the housekeeping department.

Divi Golf Aruba N.V.: The nominees for employee of the year were: Jessica Henriquez from the pro shop, Mildred Olivar from F&B and the winner was Anouska Holiger from the accounting department. The nominee for Supervisor of the year was Freddy Gross from kitchen and the winner was Francis Fun from the F&B department.

Divi Phoenix Beach Resort: The nominees for employee of the year were: Milangela Jansen from front office, Rizqua Salie from F&B, Roberto Lake from activities and the winner was Edmond Kock from the engineering department. The nominees for Supervisor of the year were: Ramon Statie from pool & beach,



Gerson Ramirez from engineering. Andres Navarro from housekeeping and the winner was Sebastian

Suarez from the F&B department.

Continued on Page 14



“The Divi Royal Masquerade Ball, year-end celebration”



Continued from Page 13

Divi y Tamarijn All Inclusive Resorts || Front of the house: The nominees for employee of the year were: Zeralda Blom from Divi front office, Efrain Andrade from Divi housekeeping and the winner was Curtis Thompson from the Divi beverage department.

The nominees for supervisor of the year was Janine Rojas and the winner was Vivian Dania from the housekeeping department.

Divi y Tamarijn All Inclusive Resorts || Back of the house: The nominees for employee of the year were: Zahaira Werleman from accounting, Joseph Dieunoclaire from kitchen, Rafael Cardenes from pool & beach, Earny Stamper from engineering, Zulaika St. Jago from night audit and the winner was Fabian Rojas from the IT department.

The nominees for supervisor of the year were: George Irwin from engineering, Magaly de Nobrega from accounting, Evert Perreira from Divi kitchen and the winner was Sheldon Taylor

from the IT department. There were also two special recognitions for Miguel Donato from landscaping for his contribution to the Divi Little Bay Resort in St. Maarten and also Mrs. Pearl Lake who was awarded the title of Manager of the Year for the Divi Phoenix Aruba Beach Resort.

Management of the Divi Resorts would like to congratulate all of its nominees and winners of the different properties for their outstanding performance during 2018.

A special thanks to DJ Joa Salas, Buleria, Elite Productions, Carlos Valenzuela from Eventions and Freddy Zedan for their contribution and for making this event a complete success!

A big thanks goes to all the banquet personnel and chefs of the Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino.

Management of the Divi Resorts would like to wish all its employees and the Aruban community Happy Holidays and is looking forward to another successful year in 2019!

We Are Divi! ☐

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End of Year Celebration at the Renaissance Aruba



ORANJESTAD — It's the annual tradition everyone is talking about. No year's end celebration is complete without the lighting up of the enormous firecracker at the Renaissance Aruba. This grand event will take place on Monday, December 31st, 2018 at 3 PM.

Renaissance Aruba together with Wind Creek Hospitality will be lighting up their traditional firecracker in front of the Renaissance Marketplace. It will be a 6 million-shot firecracker accompanied by the traditional music, 'Dande'. The fireworks of Renaissance Marketplace is a yearly tradition. A crowd gathers around to witness the biggest firecracker in the city. The General Manager of the Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino, Paul Gielen, commented that this event brings a great ambience in front of the Renaissance Aruba.



Everyone is invited to bring in the New Year together with the big family of Renaissance Aruba and Wind Creek Hospitality. And at the same time, get in some last minute shopping and take part of the phenomenal campaign 'Shop, Play, Win & Drive' at Renaissance Mall and Wind Creek Crystal Casino with the chance to win a Lincoln MKC2018.

There's also a chance you can also win several other prizes, such as dinner for two at L.G. Smith's Steak & Chop House, dinner for two at Aquarius Restaurant, a travel voucher valued at \$3,000, Royal Romance massage at Okeanos Spa, a weekend-stay at Renaissance Aruba and much more. Wind Creek Crystal Casino and Wind Creek Seaport Casino recently launched the Wind Creek 'Reward Program' which is the

most_pun intended_ rewarding program for all its members.

With a complete transformation, new interior, and new machines with the most modern jackpots in Aruba, you can say that they are the ones that pay more and has more to offer on the island of Aruba. On January 4th of 2019 the winner of the Lincoln MKC2018 will be announced.

Happy New Year from Renaissance Aruba and Wind Creek Hospitality! ☐



2019 NYE CELEBRATION

WIN A SHARE OF UP TO \$2,019 IN FREE SLOT PLAY!

MONDAY, DECEMBER 31 | 10AM TO MIDNIGHT

Earn 25 slot points or 4 table credits and swipe at any kiosk to play.
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Prices are \$99 per individual, \$190 per couple, Kids from 5 – 12 YRS \$45 and kids under 5 FREE WHEN ACCOMPANIED BY A PAYING ADULT. For reservations, please email us at groups@troparuba.com or by calling 5279160 Ext. 7777.

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SPORTS



IN VEGAS OR LA, UFC 232 IS A DYNAMITE SHOW TO FANS, FIGHTERS

By GREG BEACHAM
AP Sports Writer

INGLEWOOD, Calif. (AP) — Dana White knew the UFC would take some pretty big hits, both financial and otherwise, when he moved its traditional end-of-the-year show from Las Vegas to Southern California on six days' notice to keep Jon Jones on the card despite his latest positive drug test. Some hits are more damaging than others, however. According to White, UFC 232 is going to sell out the famous Forum on Saturday night, even though tickets only went on sale Wednesday.

That's a statement on Los Angeles' passion for mixed martial arts, but it's mostly a testament to the quality of a show that compelled fans to travel countless miles to Vegas — and then about 250 miles more to LA. UFC 232 is headlined by Jones' return to the sport in a rematch with Alexander Gustafsson for the light heavyweight title. The penultimate bout is featherweight champion Cris "Cyborg" Justino's superfight with bantamweight champ Amanda Nunes in perhaps the best matchup in women's MMA history. The big-name undercard includes former UFC champions BJ Penn, Carlos Condit and Andrei Arlovski, along with former title contenders Chad Mendes and Cat Zingano.

With such an irresistible slate of fights, the UFC is closing out the year with style — even if it's under weird circumstances for the fans and fighters.

Continued on Page 23

ACTION JACKSON



**Ravens get what they wanted:
Beat Browns to earn playoffs**

Baltimore Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson celebrates after a touchdown against the Los Angeles Chargers during the second half in an NFL football game Saturday, Dec. 22, 2018, in Carson, Calif.



In this photo provided by Rolex/Studio Borlenghi, supermaxi Wild Oats XI gets close to Hobart, Australia, on the way to winning line honors in the Sydney Hobart yacht race, Friday, Dec. 28, 2018.

Associated Press

Wild Oats XI wins Sydney to Hobart line honors

HOBART, Australia (AP) — Wild Oats XI won the 74th Sydney to Hobart yacht race on Friday, claiming line honors for the ninth time.

The Mark Richards-skippered super maxi crossed the line in Hobart shortly after 8 a.m. local time (2100 GMT Thursday) after taking the lead from defending line honors champion Comanche before sunrise.

The win came after Wild Oats XI was stripped of line honors in last year's race, with a rule breach and time penalty handing victory to Comanche.

Three other super maxis followed Wild Oats XI into Constitution Dock in Hobart. Black Jack was second, about 28 minutes behind, followed by Comanche in third and Infotrack fourth. The yacht Alive was fifth and Wild Oats X sixth, finishing nearly seven hours after the winners. Wild Oats X had the race's first all-female crew, skippered by Australian Stacey Jackson but with sailors from Britain, New Zealand, the U.S. and the Netherlands.

Peter Harburg said Wild Oats XI's Automatic Identification System (AIS) was off towards the end of the race. Wild Oats navigator Juan Vila told local media that he had turned the AIS on and believed the system had been on for the entire race, which could point to a malfunction.

However, Harburg said

Black Jack was left disadvantaged because they didn't know where Wild Oats XI was sailing.

"The rules say it's got to be on all the time," he said. "They knew where we were all the time, so that has disadvantaged us and Comanche and we are very disappointed in that."

Harburg, however, did not intend to lodge a protest but believes the Sydney to Hobart race committee should look into it. Boats have up to six hours after finishing to lodge an official protest.

As Comanche led the group of four down the Tasmanian east coast overnight, Wild Oats XI took a more easterly track, swinging in and sailing past the challengers before sunrise. The move paid off, with the super maxi swinging in and taking the lead as the yachts prepared to round Tasman Island.

"What a win. We've done it ... never before in the 74-year history of this race have four maxis battled it out like this throughout the race and in the Derwent," the team said.

"It's a day of redemption for us that's for sure. We're so happy with the result," Richards said. "We basically sailed around the opposition and got ourselves into a position where the breeze filled in from the southwest — this morning we were in the right spot," Richards said. □



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Harden scores 45, Rockets beat Celtics 127-113

By The Associated Press
HOUSTON (AP) — James Harden had 45 points and six assists, Clint Capela added 24 points and 18 rebounds, and the Houston Rockets beat the Boston Celtics 127-113 on Thursday night for their eighth win in nine games. Harden, who was playing on a bruised left calf, had 17 points in the first quarter and finished 11 of 26 from

the field, including 9 of 18 on 3-pointers. Eric Gordon scored 20 points for Houston, which shot 48 percent while improving to a season-high four games above .500. Houston finished 18 of 45 on 3-pointers. Harden has scored at least 30 points in eight straight games, the longest such streak since Russell Westbrook had eight straight 30-point games in No-

vember 2016. Harden has scored at least 35 points in six straight games, the longest streak since Carmelo

Lakers' 127-101 victory over two-time defending NBA champion Golden State on Christmas when he slipped

come a comedy of errors in losing a second straight at home. They took a 127-101 beating from the Lakers on Christmas night.

76ERS 114, JAZZ 97
SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — JJ Redick scored 24 points and Joel Embiid had 23 points, 15 rebounds and five blocks to help Philadelphia cruise past Utah. Ben Simmons, who was selected over Utah's Donovan Mitchell as Rookie of the Year last season, had his fifth triple-double of the season with 13 points, 14 rebounds and 12 assists. Mitchell scored 23 points, Dante Exum added a season-high 20 and Rudy Gobert had 17 points and 15 rebounds for the Jazz. Embiid, who has a league-leading 31 double-doubles, and Gobert both had bright moments in the post but the Jazz let Redick get loose for six 3-pointers. Jimmy Butler was also effective on the perimeter and drives for dunks as he scored 19 points.



Houston Rockets guard James Harden (13) applies defensive pressure against Boston Celtics guard Kyrie Irving during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Thursday, Dec. 27, 2018, in Houston.

Associated Press

BUCKS 112, KNICKS 96
MILWAUKEE (AP) — Giannis Antetokounmpo had 31 points and 14 rebounds, Kris Middleton added 25 points and Milwaukee beat New York for its sixth win in seven games. The Bucks swept the home-and-home series, having won at New York 109-95 on Christmas. Luke Kornet, making his first start of the season in place of Enes Kanter, tied a career high with 23 points, and Noah Vonleh added 15 points and 13 rebounds for the Knicks. New York, playing without leading scorer Tim Hardaway Jr. because of an illness, lost its sixth straight. Kanter was ejected with 9:56 left in the fourth quarter after being assessed two technical fouls. Antetokounmpo drove to the basket and was knocked down by Kanter, although no foul was called. The two got into a brief altercation as Antetokounmpo ran back up the court. Each player was called for a technical, then Kanter was called for a second. □

Anthony had six straight in April 2013. Kyrie Irving had 23 points and 11 assists, Marcus Morris added 19 points before being ejected midway through the fourth quarter, and Jaylen Brown had 18 points off the bench for Boston, which shot 47 percent but was outrebounded 54-38.

KINGS 117, LAKERS 116
SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Bogdan Bogdanovic made a 3-pointer at the buzzer and Sacramento rallied from 15 points down in the fourth quarter to beat Los Angeles in the Lakers' first game this season without LeBron James. Bogdanovic finished with 23 points and De'Aaron Fox added 15 points, 12 assists and nine rebounds. Willie Cauley-Stein had 19 points and eight rebounds, while Iman Shumpert scored 18 points and matched his career high with six 3s. James was held out with a groin injury, ending his consecutive games played streak at 156. The four-time MVP was injured during the

while going for a loose ball. Kyle Kuzma had 34 points to help make up for James' absence, and Lonzo Ball added 20 points, 12 assists and nine rebounds. But the Lakers struggled down the stretch and lost their fourth in six games.

TRAIL BLAZERS 110, WARRIORS 109, OT
OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — Damian Lillard hit a go-ahead 3-pointer with 6.3 seconds left in overtime and scored 21 points in his final regular-season game at home in Oakland, sending Portland past Golden State in a wild one. Kevin Durant missed a 13-footer off the front rim as the final buzzer sounded but finished with his second triple-double of the season: 26 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds. Jusuf Nurkic had 27 points and 12 rebounds for the Blazers. Durant hit a tying 3-pointer with 19 seconds left in regulation following a driving one-handed dunk the previous possession but the Warriors couldn't over-

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Wild and crazy season ends with lots of playoff uncertainty

By **BARRY WILNER**
AP Pro Football Writer

In a wild and crazy season, the biggest remaining tumult is in the AFC South.

Houston leads and takes the division title by beating struggling Jacksonville. A Texans loss, however, gives the winner of the prime-time game between the Colts and Titans in Nashville the crown, dropping Houston into a wild card.

"When you start off 0-3 and you're sitting here at 10-5 with a chance to win the division on Sunday you've done a lot of good things over the course of those games since we were 0-3," star defensive end J.J. Watt says. "But we have to make sure that we do what we need to do to make sure that doesn't all go to waste." There are two other AFC division crowns to settle, in the North and West, but at least the Chiefs and Chargers already are into the postseason. So while avoiding having to suit up next weekend — and the likelihood of having the conference's best record — becomes paramount, Kansas City and Los Angeles both have a comfort zone.

Baltimore and Pittsburgh do not. If the Ravens win at home over Cleveland, they take the North. If they lose and the Steelers defeat spiraling Cincinnati, Pittsburgh advances.

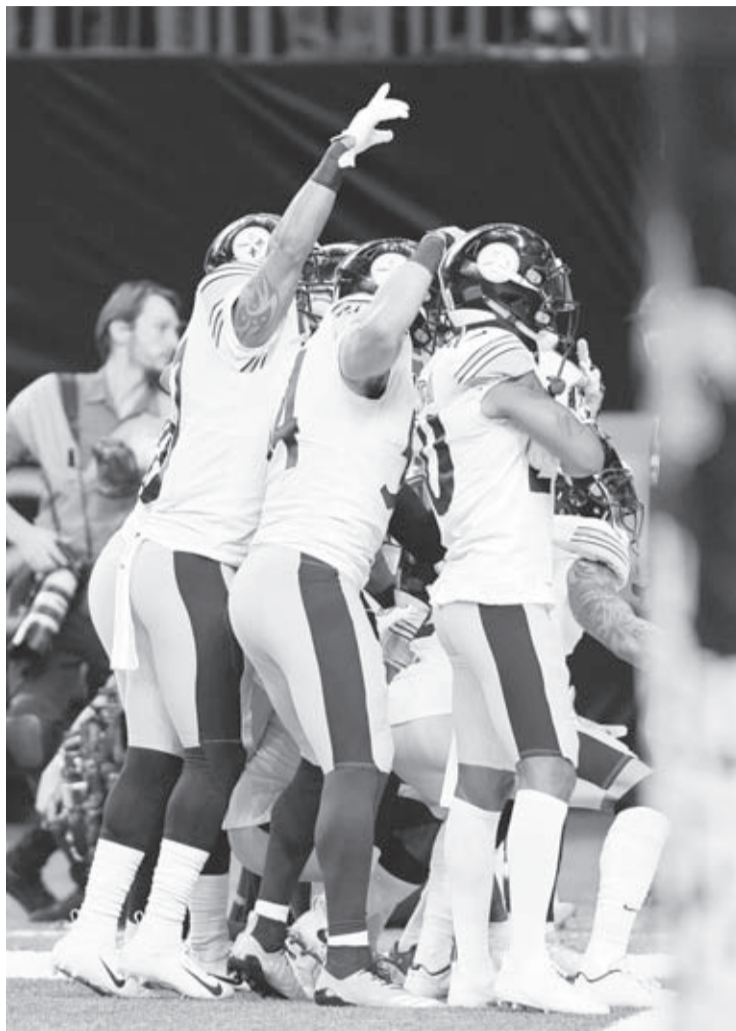
The winner of the night game in Music City will, well, be making sweet music as a playoff qualifier.

"We're just blessed to be in this position to be playing for a playoff game, so that's all the motivation that guys need," Titans safety Kevin Byard says. "They'll be motivated, we'll be motivated. It'll be a fun game."

Jacksonville (5-10) at Houston (10-5)

Watt needs one-half sack to join Reggie White as the only players since 1982 with four or more seasons with 15 or more sacks. Watt has 4½ sacks and has forced three fumbles in the past four division games.

On offense, Deshaun Watson had two touchdown passes and ran for two



This Nov. 18, 2018, file photo shows Pittsburgh Steelers head coach Mike Tomlin, center, talking to his players on the bench during the first half of an NFL football game against the Jacksonville Jaguars in Jacksonville, Fla.

Associated Press

more scores last week in a loss at Philadelphia. He has nine touchdown passes and no interceptions in his past four home games.

Jaguars quarterback Blake Bortles, who was benched after a loss to Buffalo on Nov. 25, will start, perhaps for the last time for Jacksonville. Bortles has 13 TD passes and 10 interceptions this season. Indianapolis (9-6) at Tennessee (9-6)

Advantage Andrew Luck in this rivalry: he is 10-0 in his career starts vs. the Titans. He could become the only player since 1970 with an 11-0 mark against one team.

Colts K Adam Vinatieri can break a tie with Jeff Feagles (352) for third-most games played in league history and can join George Blanda, Morten Andersen and John Carney as the only players to appear in a game at age 46.

Titans QB Marcus Mariota is recovering from a stinger that knocked him out of the last game against Washington. Backup Blaine Gabbert has started twice

and come off the bench in three other games this season for Mariota and fared relatively well.

But Tennessee's route to the playoffs likely is Derrick Henry toting the ball. Nobody has more yards rushing or TDs in December than Henry, who has 532 yards rushing and eight TD runs.

Cincinnati (6-9) at Pittsburgh (8-6-1)

Pittsburgh has won 10 of the past 11 meetings with Bengals, while the Bengals are 8-25 vs. the Steelers under coach Marvin Lewis. But last year, the Bengals won at Baltimore 31-27 in the final game, knocking the Ravens out of contention and giving a playoff berth to Buffalo. Of course, those Bengals were a lot more healthy than this injury-wrecked group.

Pittsburgh is hopeful Pro Bowl running back James Conner returns after a three-game absence (sprained left ankle).

"It's out of our control," says guard David DeCastro. "You're going to feel a

lot worse than you do now if you were to go out there and see Baltimore lose and us lose, too. It's definitely deflating, it's been a long season. We've put forth a lot of effort."

Cleveland (7-7-1) at Baltimore (9-6)

Cleveland certainly has lots of incentive, including a winning record after going 0-16 in 2017, and making an emphatic statement about the work of interim coach Gregg Williams.

That doesn't likely trump the motivation of making the playoffs, especially in a season with no overwhelming favorites. The Ravens are 9-1 against Cleveland at home under John Harbaugh, who took over in 2008. Ravens QB Lamar Jackson is 5-1 in his first six career starts, tied for third-best start in NFL history. RB Gus Edwards leads Baltimore with 642 yards rushing, with Jackson second at 605. Both are rookies.

Philadelphia (8-7) at Washington (7-8)

With last year's hero, Nick Foles, taking over once more for an injured Carson Wentz, the Eagles have made a late playoffs push. They win here and Minnesota fails and the Eagles get a chance to defend their crown. Foles threw for a franchise-record 471 yards last week vs. Houston. He's the only QB in franchise history with multiple 400-yard passing games and has averaged 279.5 yards passing in his past four starts vs. the Redskins. In a strong comeback season, Adrian Peterson rushed for 119 yards last week to surpass 1,000 for the season. Peterson's 13,259 yards rushing are eighth on the career list.

Chicago (11-4) at Minnesota (8-6-1)

A huge challenge for the Vikings, because a loss could ruin their season one year after making the NFC title game. But the Bears have lost six straight games in Minnesota and doing so again likely sends the Vikings to Soldier Field the following week. Matt Nagy is the first Bears coach with a winning record in a debut season since Paddy

Driscoll went 9-2-1 in 1956, when George Halas took a two-year hiatus. The Vikings lead the league with 50 sacks and have allowed the fewest TD drives (25) in the league for a second straight season after giving up 23 in 2017.

Oakland (4-11) at Kansas City (11-4)

The Chiefs can clinch the AFC West and No. 1 seed in the playoffs with a win and they have handled Oakland in seven of the past eight meetings. But a loss and Chargers win drops Kansas City to fifth seed.

KC's top-ranked offense could be challenged a bit by a Raiders D that has not allowed an opposing QB to throw for 300 yards in nine straight weeks. Raiders QB Derek Carr has an NFL-best streak of 325 passes without an interception.

Los Angeles Chargers (11-4) at Denver (6-9)

LA has in large part made its rush to the playoffs away from its temporary California home: The Chargers have won five straight on the road, tied for the franchise's longest since the merger. Although QB Philip Rivers is 12-15 vs. Denver, including the playoffs, he's having a special season.

The Broncos are assured of back-to-back losing seasons for the first time since 1971-72. They lost Pro Bowl selection Philip Lindsay, an undrafted free agent who has 1,037 yards rushing and nine TDs, to a wrist injury.

San Francisco (4-11) at Los Angeles Rams (12-3)

A win or tie gives LA a wild-card round bye. But the Rams haven't been as dynamic with the ball recently, and star running back Todd Gurley is battling knee issues, though C.J. Anderson filled in well last week against Arizona. DT Aaron Donald leads the NFL with 19½ sacks, and is in striking distance of Michael Strahan's record of 22½. Donald had four sacks in the Rams' first meeting with the Niners. San Francisco has had seven takeaways; the record for the fewest in a season is 11, previously done by Chicago in 2016. Carolina (6-9) at New Orleans (13-2) □

Blackwood picks up first NHL win, Devils beat Bruins 5-2

By The Associated Press
BOSTON (AP) — Mackenzie Blackwood stopped 40 shots for his first NHL victory, Blake Coleman scored twice and the New Jersey Devils beat the Boston Bruins 5-2 on Thursday night. Damon Severson scored 25 seconds into the game and Kyle Palmieri added his team-high 19th goal for the Devils, who won on the road for just the fourth time this season.

Nico Hirschier had a goal and an assist and Andy Greene had a pair of assists as New Jersey got its first win in Boston in five years. Severson's early goal on a wrist shot from the right circle gave the rookie Blackwood a lead the Devils never relinquished. Blackwood, who was making his second career start, stopped 18 of 19 shots in the second period to help stave off the Bruins.

CAPITALS 3, HURRICANES 1
WASHINGTON (AP) — T.J. Oshie scored his 11th goal and John Carlson had an empty-netter as Washington won its third straight game.

Chandler Stephenson added his second goal in three games for the Capitals, winners of 15 of their last 18 games. Braden Holtby stopped 28 shots for the Metropolitan Division leaders. The Capitals killed all four Hurricanes penalties, including a high-sticking minor on Michal Kempny with 3:46 remaining.

Sebastian Aho scored his team-leading 15th goal in the third period for the Hurricanes, who lost their third out of four games. Petr Mrazek stopped 30 shots.

PENGUINS 5, RED WINGS 2
PITTSBURGH (AP) — Phil Kessel scored two power-play goals and Derick Brassard added two scores as Pittsburgh ran its winning streak to four games.

Patric Hornqvist scored his 13th of the season. Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin each finished with two assists. Crosby has registered points in nine of his last 11 home games and has 24 points in his last 18 games.

Matt Murray stopped 27 shots for his fourth straight win since returning from a lower-body injury.

has five goals and five assists during a six-game point streak.

Zach Parise and Eric Staal

added a goal and three assists for the Lightning, who are 12-0-1 during their current run.

Pekka Rinne stopped 28 shots for the Predators, who have lost five straight. Khudobin posted his first shutout of the season and seventh of his career.

FLAMES 4, JETS 1
WINNIPEG, Manitoba (AP)

— Johnny Gaudreau had a hat trick as Calgary ended a three-game winless streak. Mark Jankowski had a short-handed, third-period goal for Calgary. Sean Monahan contributed three assists and Elias Lindholm added a pair.

Adam Lowry scored for the Jets, who had won their previous two games and had a four-game win streak at home halted.

David Rittich made 35 saves for Calgary, and Connor Hellebuyck stopped 24 shots for Winnipeg.

GOLDEN KNIGHTS 2, AVALANCHE 1

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Brandon Pirri scored his fourth goal of the season midway through the third period to send Vegas past Colorado. Pirri, recalled from the AHL's Chicago Wolves earlier in the day, blistered a shot from the point past goaltender Philipp Grubauer with 9:49 left.

Vegas staved off back-to-back power plays for Colorado in the final six minutes. Paul Stastny celebrated his 33rd birthday with a goal for Vegas, and Marc-Andre Fleury made 31 saves to improve to 21-10-4. He earned his 50th win overall with the Golden Knights.

J.T. Compher scored for the Avalanche, and Grubauer (8-4-3) made 41 saves.

SHARKS 4, DUCKS 2
SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP) — Brent Burns scored midway through the third period of his 1,000th career game and led San Jose to a victory over Anaheim.

Burns scored his fifth goal at 10:21 of the third period to break a 2-2 tie, and the Sharks snapped a three-game losing streak. The 33-year-old Burns was playing in his 428th consecutive regular-season game. The 2017 Norris Trophy winner as the league's top defenseman hasn't missed a game since November 2013. □



New Jersey Devils center Nico Hirschier (13) shoots the puck past Boston Bruins goaltender Jaroslav Halak for a goal during the third period of an NHL hockey game Thursday, Dec. 27, 2018, in Boston. The Devils won 5-2.

Associated Press

Dylan Larkin extended his career-long, 12-game point streak with his 16th goal of the season for Detroit. Andreas Athanasiou returned from a two-game absence due to an upper-body injury and scored his 12th of the season. Jimmy Howard made 35 saves.

BLUE JACKETS 4, RANGERS 3 OT

NEW YORK (AP) — Pierre-Luc Dubois scored 31 seconds into overtime and Columbus won its fifth straight victory. Chris Kreider scored twice and Jimmy Vesey added a goal for New York. Henrik Lundqvist made 25 saves.

BLACKHAWKS 5, WILD 2
CHICAGO (AP) — Patrick Kane had a hat trick, Brandon Saad scored twice and Chicago picked up its fourth win in five games.

Collin Delia made 46 saves, and Jonathan Toews, Erik Gustafsson and Dylan Strome each had two assists for Chicago, tied for last place with St. Louis in the Central Division.

Kane completed his first hat trick since March 2017. He leads the Blackhawks with 20 goals and 47 points and

scored for the Wild, who dropped their season-worst fifth straight (0-4-1).

CANUCKS 4, OILERS 2
EDMONTON, Alberta (AP)

— Elias Pettersson and Antoine Roussel each had a goal and an assist for Vancouver.

The Canucks scored four goals on their first six shots. Tyler Motte and Brock Boeser also scored for Vancouver, which is 7-2-1 in its last 10 games.

Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Leon Draisaitl scored for the Oilers, who have lost four straight.

Oilers goalie Mikko Koskinen gave up all four goals and made just two saves before being replaced by Cam Talbot, who stopped all 14 shots he faced.

Jacob Markstrom made 30 saves in the win for the Canucks.

LIGHTNING 6, FLYERS 5 OT
TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Alex Killorn scored 18 seconds into overtime and Tampa Bay, after blowing a three-goal lead in the third period, extended its point streak to 13 games.

Steven Stamkos had two goals and two assists, and Nikita Kucherov

Brayden Point and Tyler Johnson had the other Tampa Bay goals, and Andrei Vasilevskiy made 28 saves.

Dale Weise, Robert Hagg, Ivan Provorov, Michael Raffl and Claude Giroux scored for the Flyers. Michal Neuvirth stopped 31 shots.

BLUES 4, SABRES 1
ST. LOUIS (AP) — Robert Thomas had a goal and an assist and Jake Allen made 30 saves to lead St. Louis past Buffalo.

Jay Bouwmeester, Pat Maroon and Ryan O'Reilly scored for the Blues. Jack Eichel scored his 15th goal of the season in the second period for the Sabres.

Carter Hutton stopped 28 of 32 shots in his first appearance against St. Louis after spending the previous two seasons with the Blues.

STARS 2, PREDATORS 0
NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Anton Khudobin made a career-high 49 saves to lead Dallas over slumping Nashville.

Tyler Pitlick and Mattias Janmark scored for Dallas, which has won two of three.

SafeSport CEO Shellie Pfohl to step down next month

By EDDIE PELLIS
AP National Writer

Shellie Pfohl is stepping down as CEO of the U.S. Center for SafeSport after helping the organization gain footing over a two-year period of slow-but-steady progress.

Pfohl started in November 2016, and the center opened in March 2017 to become the clearinghouse for all reports of sex abuse in U.S. Olympic sports.

The center has received more than 1,800 reports and declared nearly 300 individuals permanently ineligible.

Among Pfohl's biggest challenge has been hiring

enough investigators to handle the all the cases, many of which poured in in the wake of the Larry Nassar abuse revelations and the #Metoo movement.

The center operates on a budget of around \$6.4 million a year. A few months ago, Congress awarded the center a \$2.2 million grant spread over three years, but with the caveat that the money could not be used for investigations.

The center has received criticism for not acting quickly or decisively enough in some cases, and for not publishing a comprehensive banned list that covers all sports — a proj-

ect still ongoing.

Pfohl, however, has deftly handled her appearances before Congressional committees looking into the abuse scandals, explaining the complexities for a startup designed to take responsibility for misconduct claims that used to be handled by the U.S. Olympic Committee and the dozens of individual sports organizations it oversees.

"I deeply believe that our nation's sport culture must change if we are to see athlete well-being at its centerpiece — that's what the U.S. Center for SafeSport is all about," Pfohl said in a statement announcing



In this May 23, 2018, file photo, U.S. Center for SafeSport President and CEO Shellie Pfohl testifies before the House Commerce Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee about the Olympic community's ability to protect athletes from sexual abuse, on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

her departure.

Regis Becker, a member of the center's board of directors, will serve as interim CEO after Pfohl's departure next month.

Becker is a former FBI special agent who started Penn State's ethics and compliance program in the wake of the Jerry Sandusky child sex-abuse scandal. □

UFC

Continued from Page 18

"It's not an easy decision to make," White said. "You've got to pull the trigger and you've got to make moves. You're not going to make everybody happy. You can't make every fan, every fighter happy. We did everything we could to make it better."

Not every fighter will agree after getting a shrunken paycheck due to California's state income tax. White flatly said the UFC won't compensate the fighters for any lost income due to the move.

But the pay-per-view audience still gets a stacked show headlined by the first fight in nearly 1 1/2 years for Jones (22-1), the self-sabotaging superstar who tested positive for very low levels of an anabolic steroid earlier this year.

The result isn't considered a failed doping test by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, but the Nevada Athletic Commission wanted a hearing on the matter in January. Its California counterpart had no such qualms, prompting the UFC's extraordinary move. Jones has made innumerable mistakes outside the octagon, but that bad-boy

persona combined with his brute brilliance in competition has made him irresistible to many fight fans. According to Jones, some root for his success, while others yearn for his failure with similar passion — but both camps buy his fights. Jones claims he thought about quitting the sport while he spent the past year pounding a heavy bag in his garage in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He reclaimed his light heavyweight title in July 2017 with a win over Daniel Cormier, only to lose it again due to another failed doping test.

"I was hated, and turning it all off is the easy way to deal with it," said the 31-year-old Jones, who is fighting for only the third time in nearly four years of his athletic prime.

"Financially, I didn't have to fight anymore. I could afford to delete my social media accounts and just ride off into the sunset. But I didn't want to do that. I still want to compete and be the best." He returns to fight Gustafsson (18-4), who provided Jones with the toughest fight of his life in 2013. Jones won the decision, but was battered and humbled by the Swedish contender. Gustafsson



In this Nov. 2, 2018, file photo, Jon Jones, left, and Alexander Gustafsson face off while posing for photographers during a news conference talking about their light heavyweight mixed martial arts bout at Madison Square Garden in New York.

Associated Press

has stewed over the loss for years, and he was infuriated by Jones' latest doping troubles. He labeled Jones a cheater Thursday and vowed to make the former champion "eat everything he says on Saturday night." "You put illegal stuff in your body, but it won't help you this time," Gustafsson said. "I'm ready to end this. I've learned how to dig deeper." The other championship bout at UFC 232 is every bit as compelling as the main event thanks to the bravery of Nunes (16-4), who is moving up

10 pounds to challenge the most feared women's fighter in MMA history. Justino (20-1) hasn't lost a fight since 2005, battering every contender with her peerless power and athleticism. She has long been reluctant to fight Nunes because she is a fellow Brazilian, but changed her mind after Nunes repeatedly called her out. "After everything she has said, I know that if I beat her now, nobody back (in Brazil) will look at me like I did the wrong thing," Justino said. "She is asking for it, so she can get

it now."

Nunes scrapped her way to the top of the bantamweight division and subsequently battered Ronda Rousey into retirement. Although she is an obvious underdog, Nunes believes she can claim Cyborg's mantle as the greatest female fighter.

"This is for the (title of the) baddest woman on the planet," White said. "I love this fight. I've wanted this fight for a long time. Anytime you can put a fight together between two champions, I love that." □

Army looks for a few good robots, sparks industry battle

By **MATT O'BRIEN**
AP Technology Writer
CHELMSFORD, Mass. (AP)

— The Army is looking for a few good robots. Not to fight — not yet, at least — but to help the men and women who do.

These robots aren't taking up arms, but the companies making them have waged a different kind of battle. At stake is a contract worth almost half a billion dollars for 3,000 backpack-sized robots that can defuse bombs and scout enemy positions. Competition for the work has spilled over into Congress and federal court.

The project and others like it could someday help troops "look around the corner, over the next hillside and let the robot be in harm's way and let the robot get shot," said Paul Scharre, a military technology expert at the Center for a New American Security.

The big fight over small robots opens a window into the intersection of technology and national defense and shows how fear that China could surpass the U.S. drives even small tech startups to play geopolitics to outmaneuver rivals. It also raises questions about whether defense technology should be sourced solely to American companies to avoid the risk of tampering by foreign adversaries.

Regardless of which companies prevail, the competition foreshadows a future in which robots, which are already familiar military tools, become even more common. The Army's immediate plans alone envision a new fleet of 5,000 ground robots of varying sizes and levels of autonomy. The Marines, Navy and Air Force are making similar investments.

"My personal estimate is that robots will play a significant role in combat inside of a decade or a decade and a half," the chief of the Army, Gen. Mark Milley, said in May at a Senate hearing where he appealed for more money to modernize the force.

Milley warned that adver-

saries like China and Russia "are investing heavily and very quickly" in the use of aerial, sea and ground ro-

botics over a series of major contracts to build the Army's next generation of ground robots. Those ma-

dooming its prospects for those contracts by hiring a lobbying firm that spread false information to politi-

the dispute but said the firm is still "working very closely with U.S. forces," including the Air Force, and other countries. But it's no longer in the running for the lucrative Army opportunities.

Endeavor is. Looking something like a miniature forklift on tank treads, its prototype called the Scorpion has been zipping around a test track behind an office park in a Boston suburb.

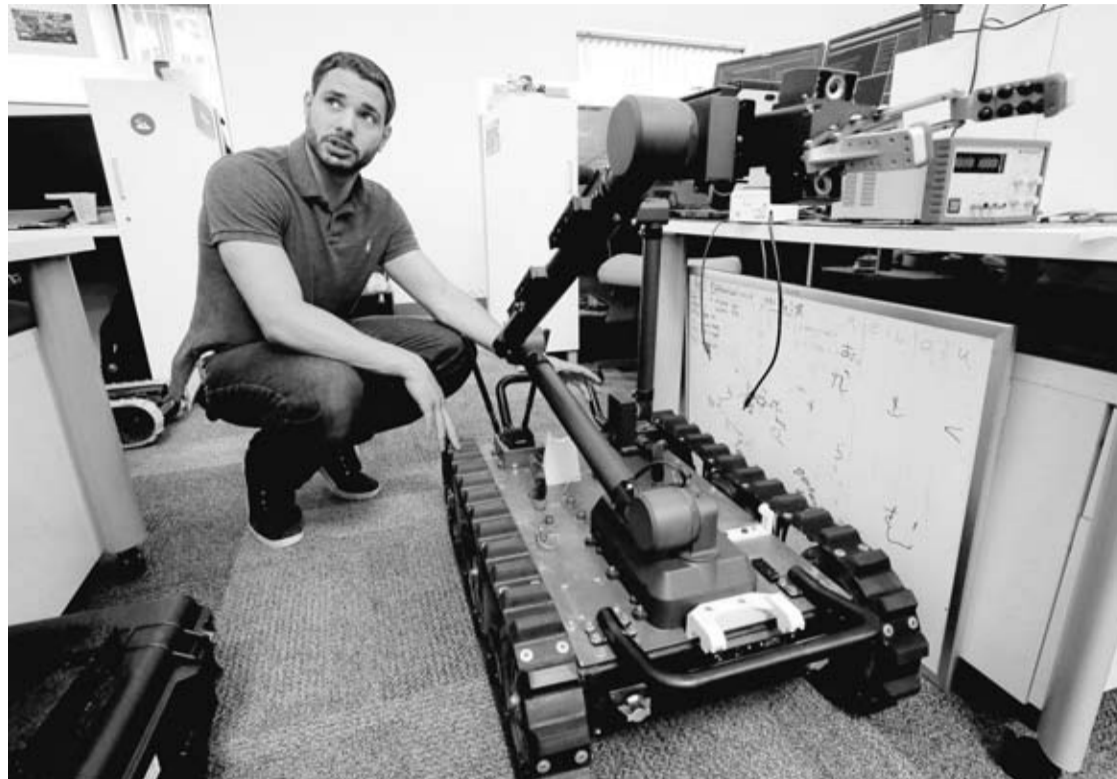
Both Endeavor and Qinetiq have strong track records with the U.S. military, having supplied it with its earlier generation of ground robots such as Endeavor's Packbot and Qinetiq's Talon and Dragon Runner.

After hiding the Scorpion behind a shroud at a recent Army conference, Bielat and engineers at Endeavor showed it for the first time publicly to The Associated Press in November.

Using a touchscreen controller that taps into the machine's multiple cameras, an engineer navigated it through tunnels, over a playground-like structure and through an icy pool of water, and used its grabber to pick up objects.

It's a smaller version of its predecessor, the Packbot, which was first used by U.S. troops in Afghanistan in 2002 and later became one of soldiers' essential tools for safely disabling improvised explosives in Iraq. Bielat said the newer Scorpion and Centaur robots are designed to be easier for the average soldier to use quickly without advanced technical training. "Their primary job is to be a rifle squad member," Bielat said. "They don't have time to mess with the robot. They're going to demand greater levels of autonomy."

It will be a while, however, before any of these robots become fully autonomous. The Defense Department is cautious about developing battlefield machines that make their own decisions. That sets the U.S. apart from efforts by China and Russia to design artificially intelligent warfighting arsenals. □



In this Aug. 28, 2018 photo, software engineer Nicholas Otero, of Woburn, Mass., speaks with a colleague about features on a Centaur robot, right, at Endeavor Robotics in Chelmsford, Mass. Associated Press

bots. And now, he added, "we are doing the same." Such a shift will be a "huge game-changer for combat," said Scharre, who credits Milley's leadership for the push.

The promise of such big Pentagon investments in robotics has been a boon for U.S. defense contractors and technology startups. But the situation is murkier for firms with foreign ties.

Concerns that popular commercial drones made by Chinese company DJI could be vulnerable to spying led the Army to ban their use by soldiers in 2017. And in August, the Pentagon published a report that said China is conducting espionage to acquire foreign military technologies — sometimes by using students or researchers as "procurement agents and intermediaries." At a December defense expo in Egypt, some U.S. firms spotted what they viewed as Chinese knock-offs of their robots.

The China fears came to a head in a bitter competition between Israeli firm Roboteam and Massachusetts-based Endeavor Ro-

chines will be designed to be smarter and easier to deploy than the remote-controlled rovers that have helped troops disable bombs for more than 15 years. The biggest contract — worth \$429 million — calls for mass producing 25-pound robots that are light, easily maneuverable and can be "carried by infantry for long distances without taxing the soldier," said Bryan McVeigh, project manager for force projection at the Army's research and contracting center in Warren, Michigan.

Other bulkier prototypes are tank-sized unmanned supply vehicles that have been tested in recent weeks in the rough and wintry terrain outside Fort Drum, New York.

A third \$100 million contract — won by Endeavor in late 2017 — is for a mid-sized reconnaissance and bomb-disabling robot nicknamed the Centaur.

The competition escalated into a legal fight when Roboteam accused Endeavor, a spinoff of iRobot, which makes Roomba vacuum cleaners, of

cians about the Israeli firm's Chinese investors. A federal judge dismissed Roboteam's lawsuit in April. "They alleged that we had somehow defamed them," said Endeavor CEO Sean Bielat, a former Marine who twice ran for Congress as a Republican. "What we had done was taken publicly available documents and presented them to members of Congress because we think there's a reason to be concerned about Chinese influence on defense technologies."

The lobbying firm, Boston-based Sachem Strategies, circulated a memo to members of the House Armed Services Committee. Taking up Endeavor's cause was Rep. Seth Moulton, a Massachusetts Democrat — and, like Bielat, a Marine veteran — who wrote a letter to a top military official in December 2016 urging the Army to "examine the evidence of Chinese influence" before awarding the robot contracts.

Six other lawmakers later raised similar concerns. Roboteam CEO Elad Levy declined to comment on

Euro currency remains a work in progress on 20th birthday

By **DAVID McHUGH**
DEREK GATOPOULOS
Associated Press
FRANKFURT, Germany (AP)

— The euro is about to celebrate its 20th birthday, but the countries that use it are still wrestling with how the shared currency should work and how to fix flaws exposed by the debt crisis that marred its second decade.

The euro was launched on Jan. 1, 1999, when 10 countries fixed their exchange rates to it and handed decisions on interest rates to the newly-founded European Central Bank. Euro notes and coins went into circulation three years later.

The shared currency was seen as a solution to the constant quarrels over exchange rates that had marked European politics after World War II and as a logical extension of the European Union's tariff-free trade zone. Britain, notably, opted out, but 19 of 28 EU countries use the euro.

The euro is credited with increasing trade between members. But countries have struggled to adjust to trouble after giving up two big safety valves: the ability to let their currency's exchange rate fall to boost exports, and to adjust their own interest rates to stimulate business activity.

One partial solution could be a central budget to keep paying bills when member countries are slammed with recessions.



In this Friday, Jan. 1, 1999 file photo, thousands of people stand around a huge Euro symbol displayed in a park in Frankfurt's banking district on the day of the launch of the Euro, the European single currency, officially adopted in 11 European states.

European leaders called for some sort of central pot of money in 2015 and are finally working on how to set one up.

Finance ministers were tasked at this month's summit with filling in the details by June. The budget remains, however, a severely limited version of an original 2017 proposal from French President Emmanuel Macron.

Another key patch — EU-wide deposit insurance to help prevent bank runs during times of stress — has been put off.

Meanwhile, the possibility of a new crisis like the one that threatened to break up the euro in 2010-2012 lurks. Italy's populist government chafes at spending restrictions that go along with the euro and wants to spend more on social welfare. Italy's dispute with the EU's executive arm, the European Commission, is on ice for now. But Italy's large debt load of 132 percent of annual economic output, lack of pro-business reforms and slow economic growth over its euro membership remain a simmering threat

that could blow up during the next recession, whenever it comes.

The original euro setup under the Maastricht Treaty signed in 1992 made it clear that economic policy and spending were strictly national responsibilities, and member states were forbidden from bailing each other out. That concept went by the wayside in 2010, when the more financially solid countries led by Germany gave bailout loans to weaker ones whose debts were no longer sustainable, and enforced tough aus-

terity as a condition. There's also a standing rescue fund, the European Stability Mechanism. The European Commission now scrutinizes countries' budgets before they're submitted to national parliaments. Perhaps most important was a 2012 European Central Bank promise to buy bonds of countries facing excessive borrowing costs, a pledge that helped calm the storm on financial markets.

But there's little agreement on going further. Germany and northern European governments like the Netherlands resist sharing risks and spending, fearing they'll end up paying for shenanigans in less well-run economies. From the other direction, France's Macron has pushed for a substantial central budget, against considerable resistance.

"We have evolved into a new, post-Maastricht framework, but we don't really have a political vision which explains what that new framework actually is," said Lucas Guttenberg, deputy director of the Jacques Delors Institute in Berlin and a former ECB economist.

An expert report carried out for the European Commission as long ago as 1977 estimated that a shared currency would need a central budget of 5 to 7 percent of gross domestic product. Without that, monetary union was deemed "impracticable." □

US pending home sales slipped 0.7 percent in November



A realtor sign hangs in front of a home for sale in Pittsburgh on Wednesday, Nov. 28, 2017.

Associated Press

By **PAUL WISEMAN**
Associated Press
WASHINGTON (AP)

— Fewer Americans signed contracts to buy homes in November as higher mortgage rates and prices continued to squeeze would-be buyers out of the market.

The National Association of Realtors said Friday that its pending home sales index dipped 0.7 percent last month to 101.4.

The index based on contract signings has dropped 7.7 percent over the past

year and has recorded 11 straight year-over-year decreases.

The rate on benchmark 30-year, fixed rate mortgages was 4.55 percent this week, down from 4.62 percent last week but up from 3.99 percent a year ago.

"The latest decline in contract signings implies more short-term pullback in the housing sector," said Lawrence Yun, chief economist at the National Association of Realtors.

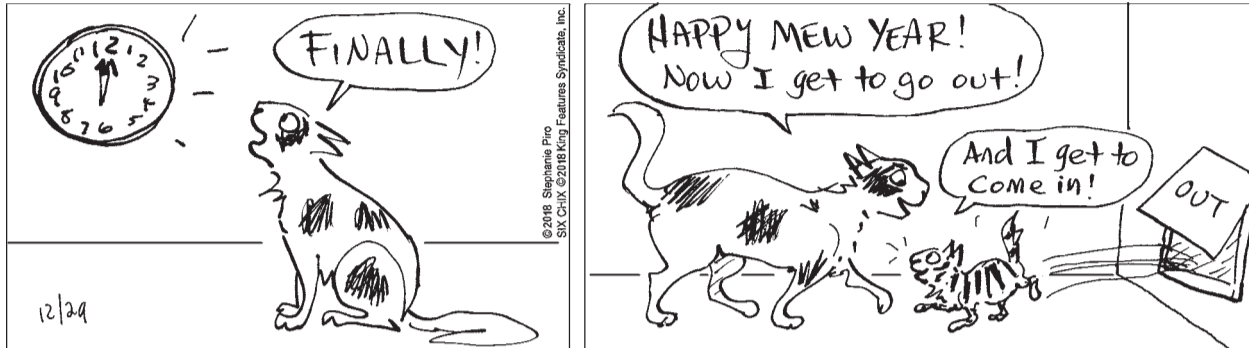
All four U.S. regions have reported annual drops in

pending home sales: The West is down 12.2 percent, the South 7.4 percent, the Midwest 7 percent and the Northeast 3.5 percent. From October to November, sales rose 2.8 percent in the West and 2.7 percent in the Northeast but fell 2.7 percent in the South and 2.3 percent in the Midwest. Pending sales are a barometer of home purchases that are completed a month or two later. So the November index suggests that sales will possibly decline through January. □

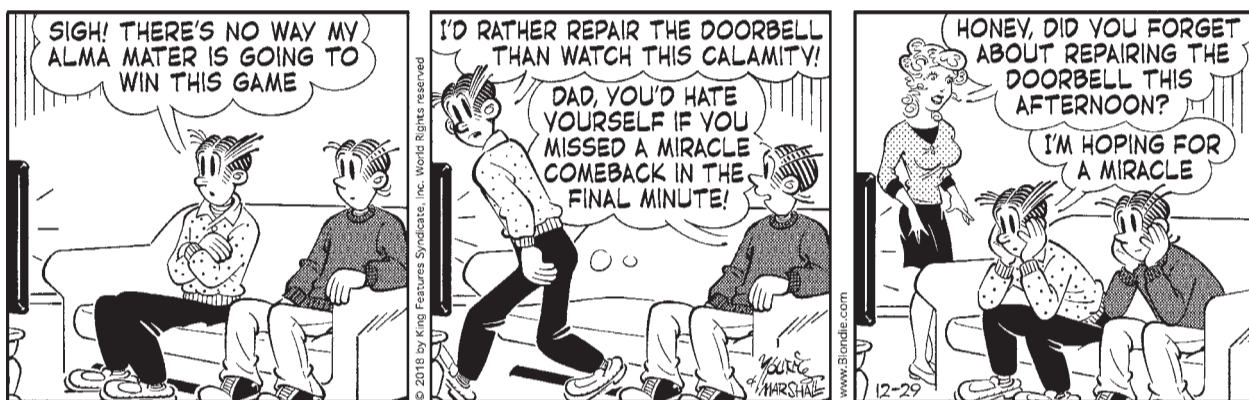
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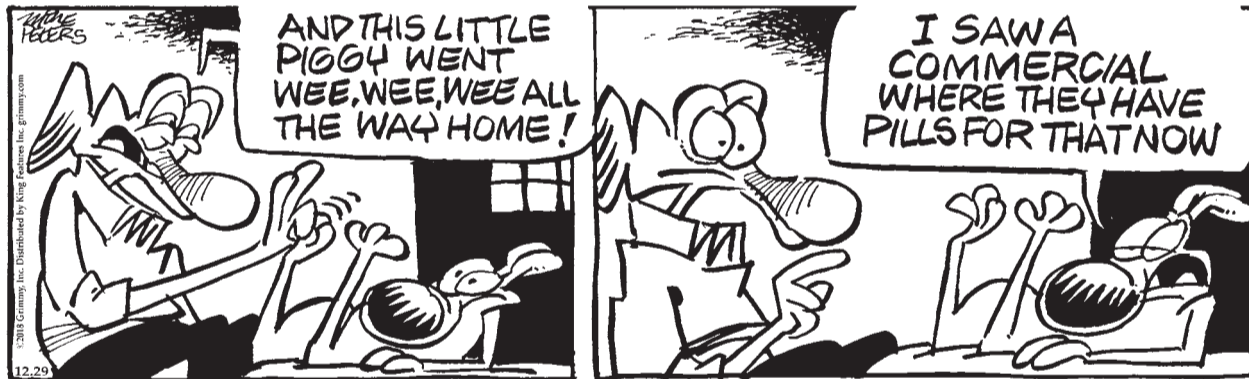
6 Chix



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Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

			4	1	7			
			1	8	3			4
								2
	9		2			8		
5	8					3	6	
	2		7			4		
4								
8			7	5	2			
	6	9		1				

Difficulty Level ★★ ★★ 12/29

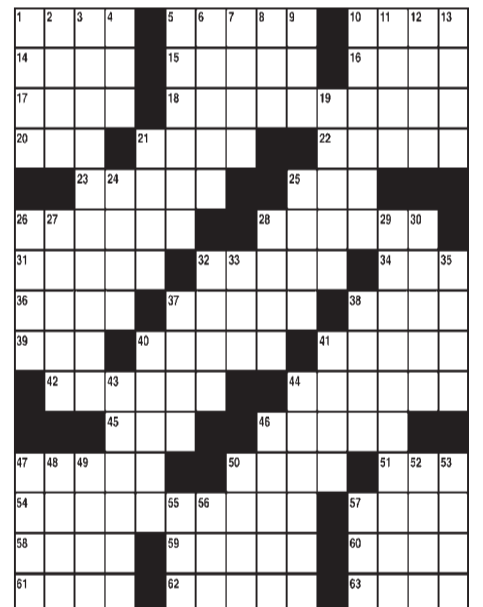
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

2	1	8	5	3	9	7	4	6
4	3	7	8	1	6	5	9	2
9	5	6	2	7	4	1	3	8
8	7	3	4	6	5	2	1	9
5	9	4	1	2	7	8	6	3
1	6	2	3	9	8	4	7	5
7	2	9	6	5	1	3	8	4
3	4	1	9	8	2	6	5	7
6	8	5	7	4	3	9	2	1

ACROSS

- 1 Prison knife
- 5 Poultry shop purchase
- 10 Curved beam overhead
- 14 Tim Daly's sis
- 15 One more time
- 16 Yarn
- 17 High point
- 18 Careless
- 20 Gun the engine
- 21 Humerus or ulna
- 22 Despised
- 23 Bumbling
- 25 Current calendar pg.
- 26 ___ public; signature certifier
- 28 Blazer
- 31 Modify
- 32 Grouch
- 34 Solemn promise
- 36 BBQ favorites
- 37 Dull noises
- 38 Mister in Munich
- 39 Actor Brynner
- 40 Self-confidence
- 41 Sicker than before
- 42 Highway divider
- 44 Deep narrow valley
- 45 Cerise or scarlet
- 46 Tough tissue
- 47 Basketball's Johnson
- 50 Repair
- 51 Road ___; inconsiderate driver
- 54 Honest
- 57 List of dishes
- 58 Six-sided figure
- 59 Still breathing
- 60 Writer Zane
- 61 Recipe verb
- 62 Deadly creature
- 63 ___ up; blow it



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews 12/29/18

Friday's Puzzle Solved

CAL	WAFER	JEST
APOP	AGILE	ACHY
WEAR	LARKS	CHIN
SNEAKIEST	LONE	
SPIN	LAY	
LESSEN	PREGNANT	
LATEX	FAUST	MOO
AGED	LACES	DATA
MEA	OILED	MAZES
ARKANSAS	RAREST	
RAT	BULL	
FGHI	EMBELLISH	
LOUS	NAIVE	NCIS
URGE	ELDER	GAVE
EYES	REELS	MET

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DOWN

- 1 Celebrity
- 2 Excessive publicity
- 3 Sure to happen
- 4 Irritate
- 5 Awning
- 6 Representative
- 7 Summon with a beeper
- 8 Wesson product
- 9 180 degrees from SSW
- 10 Assault
- 11 Huck Finn's float
- 12 Classic board game
- 13 ___ a grudge; remained bitter
- 19 Cash alternative
- 21 Lahr or Parks
- 24 Short rests
- 25 Quayle & Rafter
- 26 ___ a soul; nobody
- 27 Loathing
- 28 Green gem
- 29 In all places
- 30 Human trunk
- 32 Facial feature
- 33 Moscow's nation; abbr.
- 35 Songbird
- 37 Warty amphibian
- 38 Sharpen
- 40 Portion
- 41 Magician's rod
- 43 Motorist
- 44 Ash fragment
- 46 Begin a badminton game
- 47 Apple computers
- 48 Border on
- 49 Mongolian desert
- 50 Motel employee
- 52 Singles
- 53 Fellows
- 55 Cry from the flock
- 56 Ancient
- 57 "Dr. Zhivago" production co.

Tradition of open-air pig slaughter abides on Spanish island

Associated Press MALLORCA, Spain (AP) — Beneath wintry gray skies on the Mediterranean island of Mallorca, families, friends and neighbors gather for a centuries-old tradition that is not for the faint-hearted: the open-air slaughter of a pig. The onset of cold weather on this island, which is better known for its sunny summer beaches, signals the moment for a custom that, due to industrialization, has been dying out. "The cold cures the sausages," explains Guillermo Bezzina, owner of a large Mallorcan estate where the tradition of the annual "matanza" lives on. A professional butcher uses a long knife to slaughter the Mallorcan black pig early in the morning. Laid out on a wooden table in the farmyard, locals burn the hair off the animal and shave its skin. Almost all of the pig will be used or eaten, either as cuts of meat or sausages. A team of men butchers the pig, scraping out its innards and grinding some of the meat for sausage. Women clean and boil the intestines, some of which will be used as sausage skins. The sausages are hung on poles to cure inside farm buildings. □

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AP-NORC Poll: Most support gene editing to protect babies

By **LAURAN NEERGAARD**
AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Most Americans say it would be OK to use gene-editing technology to create babies protected against a variety of diseases — but a new poll shows they'd draw the line at changing DNA so children are born smarter, faster or taller.

A month after startling claims of the births of the world's first gene-edited babies in China, the poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds people are torn between the medical promise of a technology powerful enough to alter human heredity and concerns over whether it will be used ethically.

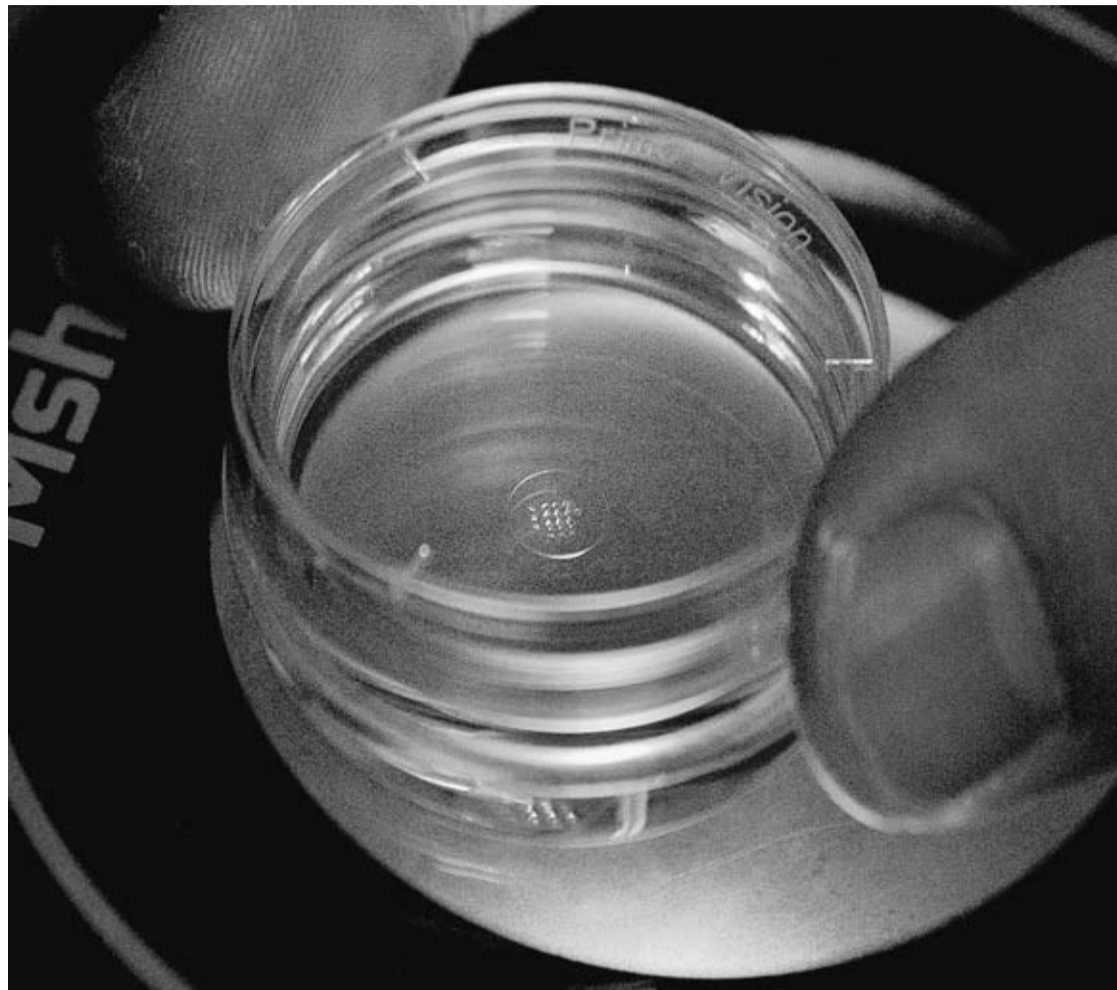
Jaron Keener, a 31-year-old exhibit designer at Pittsburgh's Carnegie Museum of Natural History, said he's opposed to "rich people being able to create designer babies."

But like the majority of Americans, Keener would support gene editing in embryos to prevent incurable diseases. His mother has lupus, an inflammatory disease that may have both environmental and genetic triggers.

Lupus has been "a looming presence my entire life. I've been around somebody with a chronic illness and I've seen the toll that has taken, not just on her life, but the life of my family," he said.

Gene editing is like a biological cut-and-paste program, letting scientists snip out a section of DNA to delete, replace or repair a gene. Altering adult cells would affect only the patient being treated.

But editing genes in eggs, sperm or embryos would



In this Oct. 9, 2018 photo, an embryologist adjusts a microplate containing embryos that were injected with gene-editing components in a laboratory in Shenzhen in southern China's Guangdong province.

alter the resulting child in ways that can be passed to future generations — a step with such profound implications that international science guidelines say it shouldn't be tested in human pregnancies until more lab-based research determines it's safe to try. The AP-NORC poll shows about 7 in 10 Americans favor one day using gene-editing technology to prevent an incurable or fatal disease a child otherwise would inherit, such as cystic fibrosis or Huntington's disease. Roughly two-thirds of Americans also favor using gene editing to prevent a child from inheriting a non-fatal condition such as blindness, and even to reduce the risk of diseases

that might develop later in life, such as cancers.

Side effects are possible, such as a gene-editing attempt that accidentally alters the wrong DNA spot, and the poll finds 85 percent think that risk is at least somewhat likely.

But about 7 in 10 Americans oppose using gene editing to alter capabilities such as intelligence or athletic talent, and to alter physical features such as eye color or height.

The poll highlights that if gene editing of embryos ever moves into fertility clinics, there will be some hard choices about what non-fatal disorders should qualify, said Columbia University bioethicist Dr. Robert Klitzman. What if scientists could pinpoint genes involved with depression or autism or obesity — would they be OK to edit?

"It's one thing to look at the extremes of fatal diseases versus cosmetic things, but in the middle are going to be these very different issues," Klitzman said.

That reported gene editing in China was an attempt to

create babies resistant to HIV infection, a target that many scientists in the U.S. and elsewhere decried because there are effective ways to prevent the AIDS virus.

The poll shows most people think it is at least somewhat likely that gene editing could wipe out certain inherited diseases and lead to other medical advances. Yet despite the medical enthusiasm, more Americans oppose than favor government funding for testing on human embryos to develop gene-editing technology — 48 percent to 26 percent. About another quarter of the population takes no stand.

Without that research, how could gene editing ever become a choice for families hoping to avoid a disease?

"That's a good question," said Keener, the Pittsburgh museum worker, who opposes such funding for fear that research would lead to designer babies rather than fighting disease.

"If there would be a way to narrow the scope of re-

search, I would be OK with government funding," he said. "I just don't have a lot of confidence people wouldn't use it for their own gain." Indeed, the poll uncovers a lack of trust in science: About a third think this kind of gene editing will be used before it's adequately tested, as many scientists say happened in China. Nearly 9 in 10 people think the technology will be used for unethical reasons, including 52 percent who say this is very likely to happen.

And roughly three-quarters of Americans say gene editing probably wouldn't be affordable for the average person — raising the specter of certain genetic diseases becoming a problem only for the poor.

"People appear to realize there's a major question of how we should oversee and monitor use of this technology if and when it becomes available," said Columbia's Klitzman. "What is safe enough? And who will determine that? The government? Or clinicians who say, 'Look, we did it in Country X a few times and it seems to be effective.'"

The AP-NORC poll of 1,067 adults was conducted Dec. 13-16 using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4.1 percentage points. Respondents were first selected randomly using address-based sampling methods, and later interviewed online or by phone.

AP reporters Carla K. Johnson in Seattle and Hannah Fingerhut in Washington contributed to this report.

The Associated Press Health & Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content. □

Arizona man finds magic moments in TV show on uncle Houdini

By TERRY TANG

Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Growing up, George Hardeen never thought too much about being related to arguably the most famous magician of all time, whose name is synonymous with great escape.

But at 66, the Arizona man is delving into the history of his great-uncle Harry Houdini in a journey at the heart of a new series on the Science Channel.

"We spoke to many collectors and historians. These guys live Houdini all the time," Hardeen said. "They know more about Houdini than I will ever be able to."

"Houdini's Last Secrets," which begins airing Jan. 6, follows Hardeen as he and escape artist Lee Terbosic explore the engineering behind some of Houdini's most legendary feats.

The Hungarian-born illusionist, who came to the U.S. as a child, generated headlines in the early 1900s for escaping from handcuffs, straitjackets and even a milk can.

Each of the four episodes focuses on a different stunt, including being buried alive and the water torture cell, in which Houdini was lowered upside down into a water tank with his feet locked in stocks. A



This October 2018 photo provided by the Science Channel shows George Hardeen, the great-nephew of magician Harry Houdini, at the Magic's Theater & Museum in Austin, Texas.

Associated Press

stunt builder constructs the props, and Terbosic re-enacts the stunts.

"No one knows how Houdini did the tricks. So, we pondered it and came up with our own methodology so that Lee could perform the trick," Hardeen said.

Wyatt Channell, a Science Channel executive producer, said Houdini knew how to create a persona and hold people's interest but the program tries to look at him from a different perspective.

"Everybody thinks of him

as an escape artist, illusionist and magician. But there was a ton of engineering behind what he was doing," Channell said.

The production company approached Hardeen about a year ago.

"I think, in many ways, the show is George's journey," Channell said. "George is really the one, as the everyman, asking the questions we all are wondering: How Houdini did these things."

It also touches on other questions, such as whether Houdini could have been

recruited to be a spy. For that, Hardeen interviewed John McLaughlin, former acting director of the CIA and a lifelong magician and Houdini fan.

Hardeen's grandfather Theo Hardeen was Houdini's younger brother and an illusionist in his own right. George Hardeen's father didn't tell his son about his magical lineage until he was about 10.

"My sister found a piece of mail that came addressed to my dad, Harry Houdini Hardeen. He always went

by Harry H. Hardeen," George Hardeen said. "That's when he basically told us."

The show has helped Hardeen learn more about the man behind the magician. Houdini, who died on Halloween 1926 at 52, and other family members had an incredible work ethic and aimed to be the best, Hardeen said. Houdini ran 10 miles (16 kilometers) a day to keep his body in peak shape but also was a hoarder with a compulsive side, he said.

"It jibes with stuff my dad told me," said Hardeen, a communication consultant for an Arizona utility.

The show brought him to the House of Houdini, a museum in his ancestral home of Budapest, Hungary, where he hopes to take his three children.

His youngest daughter, Shonie Hardeen, said she would love that opportunity. The 24-year-old from the Arizona mountain town of Flagstaff said the show has increased her interest in her dad's family and Houdini.

"Some people are from somewhere in Europe, and they can't pinpoint it," Shonie Hardeen said.

"I guess it's easier for my family to figure out stuff because he's been written about for so long." □

After a decade of dormancy, Chaka Khan blooms again

By MIKE CIDONI LENNOX

Associated Press

PASADENA, Calif. (AP) — If Chaka Khan were a flower, she'd be a perennial.

"Because I go dormant and then I..." Khan stops and gracefully lifts her arms together, then slowly brings her hands apart, like a tulip emerging in spring.

"I've done it many, many times," explained the singer, perhaps best known for her multi-million selling 1984 cover of Prince's "I Feel For You."

On the brink of her first new album in a decade, and, on New Year's Day, serving as grand marshal at the Rose Parade, Chaka Khan is in bloom again.

After receiving the call from the Pasadena Tournament of Roses Association, the term "grand mar-



In this Nov. 29, 2018 file photo, singer Chaka Khan attends the Lincoln Center Corporate Fund fashion gala honoring Coach at Alice Tully Hall in New York.

Associated Press

shal" had the 65-year-old Khan's mind running wild.

"I'll tell you what I visualized," Khan recalled.

"I imagined myself with a baton, marching in the front.

'I'm leading the whole parade.' That's what I thought."

Not even close. Instead, Khan will be seated on a comfy bench in the back seat of a classic convertible, which will slowly make its way past the thousands along the 5.5-mile parade route. (The parade will also be seen by millions more on TV.)

"This is all new for me," the 65-year-old Khan commented. "I love challenges. And I love new stuff." Khan will also open parade festivities with a performance. Publicists were unable to confirm whether the grand marshal-performer double duty is a Rose Parade first, but they did note it was the first time in recent memory. Khan said she would sing two songs: "I Feel for You," as well as "Hello Happiness," the second single from the new album.

The new song is not a political

statement — unless you want it to be. "I think we need a shot of just not taking the little things so seriously," Khan said of the "Happiness" lyrics. "Little things are important. It's about the little things, but just flow."

So, why take such a long break between the two releases?

Khan said she never stopped recording from 2008-2018, she simply stopped releasing material.

She also took care of herself physically and made up for all those lonely years on the road by spending time with family and friends.

She also needed time to pull herself together after the April 2016 passing of old friend Prince, who died of a drug overdose.

Some six months later, Khan entered rehab to deal with her own prescription-drug addiction. □

Fabulous fashion of 'Mrs. Maisel' is more than just attire

By **BROOKE LEFFERTS**

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Fans of "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel" know that the show's clothes deliver eye-popping color and to-die-for style, but they might not know the costumes represent more than 1950's couture. They also meticulously reflect each character's mood and development. Costume designer Donna Zakowska said she thought about how each character changed from season one of the hit show to season two, which premiered on Amazon Prime Video earlier this month. Zakowska started out studying painting at Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, which instilled a "very strong response to color," she said in a recent interview, and that influenced her approach in costume design. One of her first decisions was putting lead character Midge Maisel, played by Rachel Brosnahan, in a baby pink coat in the first season when she is married and seemingly happy. But when Midge's husband



This image released by Amazon shows Rachel Brosnahan in a scene from "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel."

leaves her, her character puts on different, darker colors. "I basically did this with most of the characters and it's a little bit natural in a way because I do think that there is this emotional response that is inherent in color," Zakowska said.

Brosnahan said while the second season is full of "exceptional clothes," the outfits aren't just eye candy. Zakowska helps shape the narrative with her designs. "She's a storyteller. And she dives just as deeply, if not more deeply in some ways, than we do into these characters, into their arcs, into the stories, into the settings, into everything that came before and is yet to come." "She is a mad scientist," "Maisel" creator Amy

Sherman-Palladino said in a recent interview. "She doesn't believe a hat is a hat. You know, a hat is a character. It's a person. That hat needs to reflect where the person is internally. She started it last year with ... the pink coat and the pink coat represented something and when Joel (Mr. Maisel) left, the pink coat left, because the pink coat represented who she was with Joel. And then pink went away for a while,

and when pink started to come back, it was a different kind of pink because she was a different kind of woman. She's (Zakowska) just a very fascinating, brilliant person." Zakowska said she leads a crew of at least 25 people on set to dress the principal players and the extras in hundreds of costume changes. She pays strict attention to detail, even for day players, who often wear 1950's outfits found in vintage stores or on the internet. But most of the clothes worn by the principal characters are designed by Zakowska. Not all the clothes are fun to wear. Zakowska said one of the most important accessories on the show is the underwear — which had to be tight and supportive, even for the extras. "It's like really the end of the era of the corset... that's something you really can't avoid. We can't all have period bras but we worked with Playtex and they had a certain bra they created for us that we used. And so you do to a degree have to sort of pull women in, you know, bring the bust up...there's no way around it, otherwise we couldn't get people into those dresses." □

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<p>NEW THIS WEEK!</p> <p>JENNIFER LOPEZ MILO VENTIMIGLIA SECOND ACT MON/THU & SUN: 4:30 7:10 9:30 FRI/SAT: 4:30 7:10 9:30 11:50</p>	<p>FELICITY JONES ARMIE HAMMER ON THE BASIS OF SEX MON/THU & SUN: 4:30 9:00 FRI/SAT: 4:30 9:00 11:40</p>
<p>JASON MORNIA AMBER HEARD AQUAMAN WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES MON/THU & SUN: 2:00 4:55 7:50 FRI/SAT: 2:00 4:55 7:50 10:45</p>	<p>HAILEE STEINFELD DYLAN O'BRIEN BUMBLEBEE WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES MON/THU & SUN: 1:30 4:30 6:50 9:20 FRI/SAT: 1:30 4:30 6:50 9:20 11:50</p>
<p>JAKE JOHNSON HAILEE STEINFELD SPIDER-MAN WITH THE SPIDER-VERSE WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES MON/SUN: 1:30 4:00</p>	<p>JOHN C. REILLY SARAH SILVERMAN RALPH BREAKS THE INTERNET WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES MON/SUN: 1:00</p>
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Angelina Jolie doesn't rule out move into politics

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Angelina Jolie has not ruled out a move into politics — and has joked that she might be tough enough to take the rough and tumble that comes with it. The American actress and U.N. envoy told BBC radio she "can take a lot on the chin" — a possible reference to her bitter divorce from Brad Pitt. When asked if she is moving in the direction of politics, the 43-year-old Oscar winner said, "I honestly will do whatever I think can really make change." Jolie is a special envoy for the U.N. refugee agency.



In this file photo dated Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2018, Special Envoy for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Angelina Jolie addresses the media at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

Associated Press

She used her slot as a "guest editor" on the BBC to highlight refugee issues in the Middle East.

She also included Chinese artist Ai Weiwei and Nobel Peace Prize winner Denis Mukwege on the show. □

A star-making role for Joanna Kulig in 'Cold War'

By LINDSEY BAHR
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The name Joanna Kulig might not ring a bell for the majority of American moviegoers, but that could all change in the coming weeks with the theatrical expansion of "Cold War." The Polish drama from "Ida" director Pawel Pawlikowski about a singer, Zula (Kulig) and a musician, Wiktor (Tomasz Kot), "doomed" to love one another has made Kulig someone-to-watch on the international stage. With a timeless movie star quality that only comes along every so often, Kulig has been compared to everyone from Jennifer Lawrence to "Jules and Jim"-era Jeanne Moreau.

Kulig, 36, had enjoyed relative success working in film and television in Poland, in projects like "Elles" with Juliette Binoche, and in "Ida," where she played a pop star. But when "Cold War" premiered at the Cannes Film Festival earlier this year (and an "eight-minute standing ovation"), Kulig found herself in a spotlight that has yet to dim.

"For me it's very exciting. I'm very happy about Polish films and more and more people from the states can learn about Polish film, Polish culture — this is one thing — but another, this is very new situation and very new for me how film works," Kulig said recently in Los Angeles. "We did Cannes, it was something very big. There was a big standing ovation and Julianne Moore and Benicio del Toro, they cried and they said, 'Thank you for this.' I was surprised, you know? I'd never been in a situation like that."

"Cold War" has struck a chord around the world. Achingly beautiful, tantalizingly brief (at 88 minutes), the film is a musical odyssey as Zula, an ambitious and talented girl from the wrong side of the tracks intent on survival, and Wiktor, an urbane musician who is taken by Zula's feral charisma, chase one another across the eastern bloc



In this Dec. 3, 2018 photo, Joanna Kulig, a cast member in the Polish film "Cold War," poses for a portrait at the The London West Hollywood hotel in West Hollywood, Calif.

through the decades.

Kulig likened their romance to that of Marilyn Monroe and Arthur Miller, and its universal appeal to "Casablanca."

"He was intellectual, more educated, very warm and calm, and Zula was quite like Marilyn Monroe like a wounded bird, like sensitive and emotional but at the same time distracted because of her difficult childhood," she said.

Pawlikowski said he made Kulig watch Lauren Bacall to get the "timing and delivery down."

"The Zula character is quite nasty at times and quite sarcastic and Joanna doesn't have that in her character," he said.

"Joanna won the award for the best actress at the Cairo Film Festival. The local audiences adored her, but they were furious at me for having made the film in black and white," Pawlikowski said. "They said, 'She's so beautiful! Why would you have made the film in black and white?'"

The film proved so emotionally taxing on Kulig that once it was complete she and her husband escaped to California for a month, exploring the coast and the national parks in a rented car.

"It was great. You travel, it's empty, you can be in

your own world," she said. "Because when you're an actor, it's this wonderful job, but like you are in one subject for a long time. It's a very big psychological process ... You have to find your own place and come back to your own life." And, importantly, she add-

ed, everyone is asleep in Poland when it's daytime in California.

Now she's back on the West Coast again, although this time it's hardly a vacation. She's bouncing around between press engagements, "Cold War" screenings and awards events and industry

meetings. She's met Brad Pitt, Timothee Chalamet, Quincy Jones and Lady Gaga at various awards events. Steven Spielberg wanted to meet with her. And she's already filmed a part in the Amazon adaptation of "Hanna."

"I'm open," Kulig said of her plans going forward. "I like new experiences in life and new cultures."

Pawlikowski thinks she could be destined for bigger roles in Hollywood films too, provided she has the right material and director. ("It's not like actors just turn up and do something," he said.)

"The good thing is she's got her head screwed on the right way. She's not a young girl just starting. I think she'll make the right choices. She's got potential. She has a unique personality. It's rare to come across someone so original and genuine," he said. "She's a very truthful, spontaneous and in the moment person. She lights up. And she doesn't lie which is strange for an actor." □

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No more paperwork: Estonia edges toward digital government

By **DANICA KIRKA**
Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — In the Estonian capital of Tallinn, three-day-old Oskar Lunde sleeps soundly in his hospital cot, snuggled into a lime green blanket decorated with red butterflies. Across the room, his father turns on a laptop.

"Now we will register our child," Andrejs Lunde says with gravity as he inserts his ID card into the card reader. His wife, Olga, looks on proudly.

And just like that, Oskar is Estonia's newest citizen. No paper. No fuss.

This Baltic nation of 1.3 million people is engaged in an ambitious project to make government administration completely digital to reduce bureaucracy, increase transparency and boost economic growth. As more countries shift their services online, Estonia's experiment offers a glimpse of how interacting with the state might be for future generations.

Need a prescription? It's online. Need someone at City Hall? No lines there — or even at the Department of Motor Vehicles! On the school front, parents can see whether their children's homework was done on time.

Estonia has created one platform that supports electronic authentication and digital signatures to enable paperless communications across both the private and public sectors.

There are still a few things that you can't do electronically in Estonia: marry, divorce or transfer property — and that's only because the government has decided it was important to turn up in person for some big life events.

This spring, government aims to go even further. If Oskar had been born a few months later, he would have been registered automatically, with his parents receiving an email welcoming him into the nation. Marten Kaevats, Estonia's national digital adviser, says the goal is a government that supports its citi-



This photo taken on Thursday, Nov. 15 2018, shows an exhibition in Tallinn presenting Estonia's digital achievements.

zens while staying out of the way.

"In an ideal world, in the case of an invisible government, when a new child is born neither of the parents would ever have to apply for anything: to get maternity leave, to get child support from the municipality, to get a kindergarten place, to put the name to the child," he said. "All of those different services would be delivered automatically."

Siva Vaidhyanathan, director of the Center for Media and Citizenship at the University of Virginia, says other countries have a lot to learn. Estonia took time to build security and privacy into its model, in contrast with failed efforts by private companies to provide se-

cure online voting systems in the United States, for example.

"It made sure that state accountability is part of the process," he said.

Estonians largely seem to have embraced the system despite global concerns about data hacks.

At a demonstration showcasing the digital system, project manager Indrek Onnik stood beside a huge screen illustrating his profile. He showed off his high school grades from a decade ago and his diving license records. If he had a dog, its vaccination record would appear there, too.

Citizens can monitor their data and see if any government or private institution accesses it.

"To generate trust, you re-

ally have to have transparency," he said. "And that's why people have access to their own data. And that's why they can actually see if the government has used their own data."

The platform is underpinned by software called X-Road, a decentralized data exchange system that links outgoing data is digitally signed and encrypted, and all incoming data is authenticated and logged.

The government, fearing attempts to compromise its borders by neighboring Russia, also has a backup plan to restore digital services in the event of invasion or severe cyberattacks: data "embassies" in countries like Luxembourg. Like a regular embassy, the servers are considered Estonian territory and would give the government a chance to boot up elsewhere if needed.

Making life simpler for citizens has economic benefits in a country otherwise known for unforgiving winters and old growth forests. The project, which began in 1997, laid the groundwork for Estonia's booming tech sector. Skype, the video-calling service Microsoft bought for \$8.5 billion in 2011, is Estonia's most famous high-tech export, but the impact is broader.

Information and communications accounted for 5.9 percent of the economy last year.

The government hopes to increase that figure with an "e-residency" program that lets entrepreneurs around the world register their businesses in Estonia and gain a foothold in the European Union. More than 51,000 people from 167 countries have applied at a cost of 100 euros (\$114) each.

The advances in digitization are the result of long-term thinking.

When Estonia declared independence in 1991, the economy was so backward in this former Soviet republic it had to be rebuilt from scratch. The leadership looked for an industry where the country could compete. They decided on information technology and the internet, a field that was as new as Estonia, said former President Toomas Hendrik Ilves.

When the cash-strapped country needed to replace a 1930s phone system, Finland offered a late 1970s analog system free of charge. But Ilves argued that the government should decline the offer and invest in digital technology.

"The only way we could do really well was to go digital," Ilves said, speaking from Stanford University, where he is a distinguished visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution. "We stood a chance of competing there."

Ilves, who grew up in the United States and was introduced to computers in junior high, proposed getting kids started early. The government started building computer labs in schools. Banks supported the move, as it reduced the need for branches in rural villages. More than 99 percent of Estonia's banking transactions now take place online.

Whether Estonia's system can be used in larger countries is an open question, said Zvika Krieger, head of technology policy and partnerships at the World Economic Forum. □



In this photo taken on Friday, Nov. 16 2018 in Tallinn, Estonia, a card shows all the details to register the birth of new baby Oskar Lunde.

Associated Press